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Northumberland County Council

Northumberland Local Plan: Draft Local Plan

Sustainability Appraisal Report



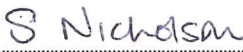
Report For

Kevin Tipple
Senior Planning Officer
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

Main Contributors

Ryan Llewellyn
Adam Mealing
Frances Wilkinson
Pete Davis

Issued By

pp 
Frances Wilkinson

Approved By


Pete Davis

Wood

Partnership House
Regent Farm Road
Gosforth
Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3AF
United Kingdom
Tel +44 (0) 191 272 6100

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Document Revisions

No.	Details	Date
1	Draft Report	21.05.18
2	Final Report	28.05.19

Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

This Non-Technical Summary (NTS) provides an overview of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report produced as part of the SA of the new Local Plan¹ for Northumberland (the Draft Local Plan) that is currently being prepared by Northumberland County Council (the Council). The SA is being carried out on behalf of the Council by Wood² to help integrate sustainable development into the emerging Draft Local Plan.

The following sections of this NTS:

- Provide an overview of the Draft Local Plan;
- Describe the approach to undertaking the SA of the Draft Local Plan;
- Summarise the findings of the SA of the Draft Local Plan; and
- Set out the next steps in the SA of the Draft Local Plan including how to respond to the consultation on this SA Report.

What is the Draft Local Plan for Northumberland?

The Local Plan for Northumberland will be a single planning policy document. It will set out the vision and objectives for the County to 2036 as well as the spatial strategy in terms of how much new development will be accommodated in the County over the plan period and where in the County this growth will be located. The vision, objectives and spatial strategy will be delivered through the Local Plan's key planning policies and land allocations.

Development of the Local Plan will be informed by ongoing consultation, evidence gathering and assessment (including SA) before it is submitted for Examination in Public. The Council expects to adopt the Local Plan in 2020. The current draft (Draft Local Plan) has been revised to reflect the consultation on the Initial Local Plan in July and August 2018, and the Publication Draft Local Plan in January-March 2019. Whilst the housing development requirements and spatial strategy are unchanged, there has been further refinement of the proposed employment land provision and planning policies. The Council's current timetable for preparation of the Local Plan is contained in **Table NTS 1**.

Table NTS 1 Local Plan Preparation Milestones

Stage of Plan Preparation	Indicative Timescales
Consult on draft SA Scoping Report with appropriate consultation bodies	March 2018
Consult on Draft Local Plan along with SA Report Interim SA Report (Reg 18)	July-August 2018
Consult on Publication Draft Local Plan along with SA Report (Reg 19)	January 2019 to March 2019
Submit the Draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State along with final SA Report	May 2019
Examination of Local Plan	September 2019
Adoption of Local Plan	March 2020

¹ References in this report to Draft Local Plan refers to the Publication Draft Local Plan plus the schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications to the Publication Draft (Regulation 19) Local Plan

² Formerly Amec Foster Wheeler, which was acquired in October 2017 by Wood Group.

Further information about the Local Plan is set out in Section 1.3 of the SA Report and is available via the Council's website: www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan.

What is Sustainability Appraisal?

National planning policy³ states that local plans are key to delivering sustainable development. Sustainable development is that which seeks to secure net gains across economic, environmental and social objectives to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Northumberland Local Plan should contribute to a sustainable future for the plan area. To support this objective, the Council is required to carry out a SA of the Local Plan⁴. SA is a means of ensuring that the likely social, economic and environmental effects of the Local Plan are identified, described and appraised and also incorporates a process set out under a European Directive⁵ and related UK regulations⁶ called Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Where negative effects are identified, measures are proposed to avoid, minimise or mitigate such effects. Where any positive effects are identified, measures are considered that could enhance such effects. SA is therefore an integral part of the preparation of the Local Plan.

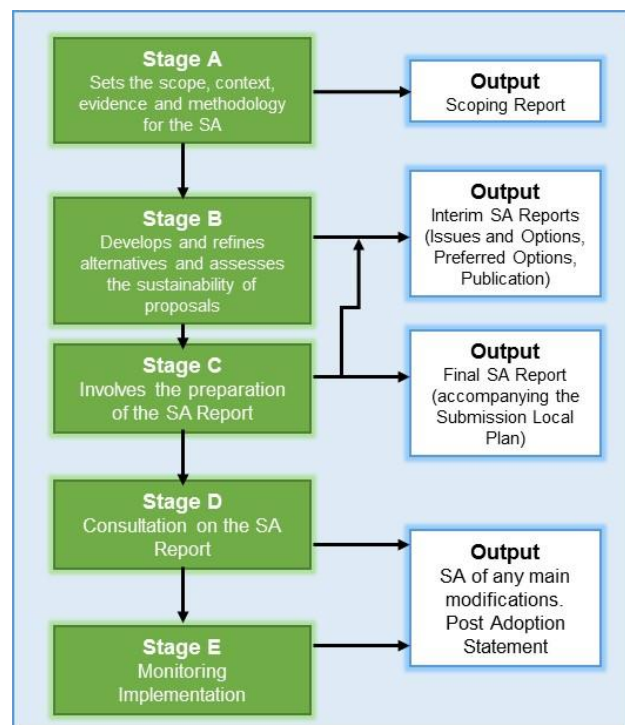
What does Sustainability Appraisal Require?

There are five key stages in the SA process which are shown in **Figure NTS.1**.

The first stage (**Stage A**) of the SA process involved consultation on a SA Scoping Report. The Scoping Report⁷ set out the proposed approach to the appraisal of the Local Plan including a SA Framework and was subject to consultation that ran from 28th March to 2nd of May 2018. Six⁸ consultation responses were received.

Stage B of the SA process is iterative and involves the development and refinement of the Local Plan by testing the sustainability strengths and weaknesses of the emerging Plan options, spatial strategy, policies and allocations. In this respect, SA is undertaken throughout the preparation of the Local Plan with the findings presented in a series of interim SA Reports. The Draft Local Plan for Regulation 18 consultation was subject to appraisal and the resulting SA Report⁹ (along with the draft plan) was subject to consultation that ran from 4th of July to 15th of August 2018. Only one consultation response was received (from Natural England). The Regulation 19 Publication Draft Local

Figure NTS 1 The SA Process



³ See paragraph 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019).

⁴ The requirement for SA of local plans is set out under section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

⁵ Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

⁶ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (statutory instrument 2004 No. 1633).

⁷ Amec Foster Wheeler (2018) *Northumberland Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal: Scoping Report*.

⁸ Responses were received from Natural England, the Environment Agency, Historic England, Eglington Parish Council, Northumberland & Newcastle Society and Banks Property.

⁹ Wood (2018) *Northumberland Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal: Regulation 18 Consultation Sustainability Appraisal Report*.

Plan was subject to appraisal and the resulting SA Report¹⁰ (along with the Publication Draft Plan) was subject to consultation that ran from 30th January to 13th of March 2019. In response, nine consultation responses on the SA Report were received, including the three SEA statutory consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England). This completed **Stage B** of the SA process.

At **Stage C**, this final SA Report has been prepared to accompany the submission of the Draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to undergo examination. This SA Report will be available alongside the Local Plan itself for consideration by an independent planning inspector (**Stage D**).

Following Examination in Public, and subject to any significant changes to the Draft Local Plan that may require appraisal, the Council will issue a Post Adoption Statement as soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of the Local Plan. This will set out the results of the consultation and SA processes and the extent to which the findings of the SA have been accommodated in the adopted Local Plan. During the period of the Local Plan, the Council will monitor its implementation and any significant social, economic and environmental effects (**Stage E**).

How Has the Draft Local Plan Been Appraised?

To support the appraisal of the Draft Local Plan, a SA Framework has been developed. This contains a series of sustainability objectives and guide questions that reflect both the current socio-economic and environmental issues which may affect (or be affected by) the Draft Local Plan and the objectives contained within other plans and programmes reviewed for their relevance to the SA and the Draft Local Plan. The SA objectives and guide questions which comprise the SA framework are shown in **Table NTS 2**.

Table NTS 2 SA Objectives and Guide Questions Used to Appraise the Draft Local Plan

SA Objective	Guide Questions
1. To improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities? Will residents' quality of life be adversely affected? Will it help in tackling rising obesity levels? Will it increase regular participation in sports/exercise? Will it maintain and enhance healthcare facilities and services? Will it provide for or improve access to high quality, accessible healthcare facilities? Will it help to provide for and support the ageing population of Northumberland? Will it maintain / improve access to open space, recreational and leisure facilities? Will it help to reduce pollution (noise, emissions, light)?
2. To improve the quality, range and accessibility of community services and facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including healthcare, education, retail and leisure? Will it promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities? Will it promote the vitality and viability of town centres? Will it encourage active involvement of local people in community activities? Will it maintain and enhance rural facilities? Will it decrease the amount of traffic using the road system? Will it reduce adverse impacts of transportation on communities and the environment?

¹⁰ Wood (2019) *Northumberland Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal: Regulation 19 Consultation Sustainability Appraisal Report*.

SA Objective	Guide Questions
3. To deliver safer communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it promote design of buildings and spaces to reduce crime and the fear of crime? Will it help reduce incidence of anti-social behaviour and substance misuse? Will it encourage social inclusion? Will it contribute towards road safety for all users?
4. To ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it provide an adequate supply of affordable housing? Will it support the provision of a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of all part of the community? Will it ensure a flexible supply of land for residential development, especially in the rural parts of Northumberland? Will it ensure that appropriate use is made of the existing housing stock? Will it promote of sustainable building techniques including innovative building materials and construction methods? Will it provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities? Will it promote improvements to the existing housing stock? Will it help to ensure the provision of good quality, well designed homes?
5. To strengthen and sustain a resilient local economy which offers local employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it help provide good quality, well paid employment opportunities that meet the needs of local people? Will it maximise opportunities for all members of society? Will it tackle the causes of poverty and deprivation? Will it protect and enhance the vitality and viability of existing employment areas? Will it provide employment land in areas that are easily accessible by public transport? Will it direct appropriate retail, leisure and/or employment opportunities to town centre locations to aid urban regeneration? Will it support the rural economy and farm diversification? Will it recognise the importance of the environment to the local economy? Will it encourage or promote tourism? Will it encourage development of a low-carbon economy in Northumberland? Will it redress the lack of working age population in the County?
6. To deliver accessible education and training opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it provide, support and improve access to high quality educational facilities? Will it improve the skills and qualifications throughout the working age population? Will it help to provide a supply of skilled labour to match the needs of local businesses? Will it reduce inequalities in skills across Northumberland? Will it support community enterprises and the voluntary sector? Will it support the creation of flexible jobs to meet the changing needs of the population?
7. To reduce the need for travel, promote more sustainable modes of transport and align investment in infrastructure with growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it reduce the need to travel and reliance on the private car? Will it increase the range, availability and use of sustainable travel choices i.e. public transport, walking, cycling? Will it promote car-share schemes and/or working from home? Will it reduce traffic volumes? Will it help to reduce out-commuting? Will it support investment in transport infrastructure?

SA Objective	Guide Questions
8. To conserve and enhance Northumberland's biodiversity and geodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it conserve and enhance internationally, nationally and locally nature conservation designated sites and areas of ancient woodland and protected species? Will it help to improve the quality of SSSI to help ensure more are in favourable condition? Will it maintain and enhance woodland cover and management? Will it avoid habitat fragmentation and strengthen ecological framework? Will it ensure all new developments protect and enhance local biodiversity? Will it contribute to the achievement of objectives and targets within the Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan? Will it incorporate a network of multifunctional Green Infrastructure within new developments, where appropriate? Will it result in a net gain for the natural environment with each new development? Will it provide opportunities for people to access the natural environment?
9. To ensure the prudent use and supply of natural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it minimise the loss of soils to development? Will it maintain and enhance soil quality and functioning? Will it ensure that mineral resources are not sterilised unnecessarily? Will it provide an adequate supply of minerals to meet society's needs?
10. To encourage the efficient use of land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it promote the use of previously developed land (PDL) and minimise the loss of greenfield land? Will it avoid the loss of agricultural land including best and most versatile land? Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land? Will it encourage the reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure? Will it prevent land contamination and facilitate remediation of contaminated sites?
11. To protect and enhance the quality of Northumberland's river, transitional and coastal and ground and surface water bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it maintain and where possible enhance the flow, quality and quantity of rivers, ground and surface water bodies, bathing and coastal waters? Will it encourage sustainable and efficient management of water resources? Will it ensure that essential water infrastructure is co-ordinated with all new development? Will it contribute positively to achieving objectives set for the Northumbria and Tweed/Solway River Basin Management Plans as part of delivery of the Water Framework Directive? Will it encourage sustainable practices in aquatic farming, fishing and other businesses? Will it contribute positively to achieving the aims of the integrated Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan and use an ecosystem approach to coastal and marine management?
12. To improve air quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it maintain and improve air quality? Will it mitigate the impacts on air quality from road transport? Will it discourage or mitigate against uses that generate NO2 or other particulates?
13. To reduce and or avoid flood risk to people and property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it help to minimise the risk of flooding to people and property in new and existing developments? Will it help to minimise the risk of minewater flooding? Will it protect and enhance the natural function of floodplains? Will it promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) in appropriate circumstances? Will it take into account predicted future impacts of climate change, including water scarcity and flooding events? Will it discourage development in areas at risk from flooding? Will it ensure that new development does not give rise to flood risk elsewhere?

SA Objective	Guide Questions
14. To minimise greenhouse gases and ensure resilience to the effects of climate change through effective mitigation and adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change e.g. flooding, disruption during extreme weather etc.? Will it reduce vulnerability of the economy to climate change and harness any opportunities that may arise? Will it support low carbon and renewable energy and sustainable design? Will it ensure that impacts and opportunities of climate change on natural habitats and species are fully considered and incorporated in spatial planning decisions? Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption or providing energy from waste? Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources? Will it promote energy efficiency in buildings and new development? Will it reduce contributions to climate change through sustainable building practices? Will it contribute to reducing Northumberland's carbon footprint?
15. To reduce the amount of waste that is produced and increase the proportion that is reused, recycled and composted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it lead to reduced consumption of materials and resources? Will it reduce waste arisings and increase waste reuse, recycling and recovery? Will it reduce hazardous waste? Will it reduce waste in the construction industry? Will it provide a framework in which businesses, communities and individuals take more responsibility for their own waste? Will it ensure the design and layout of new development supports sustainable waste management? Will it provide a suitable range of facilities throughout the County to assist in increasing rates of recycling and composting?
16. To conserve and enhance Northumberland's cultural heritage and diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it conserve and where appropriate enhance sites, features and areas of historical, archaeological or cultural value in both urban and rural areas including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and Historic Parks and Gardens? Will it recognise the significance of heritage assets and their settings and the contribution of the setting to the significance? Will it ensure appropriate archaeological or building assessments are undertaken prior to development? Will it promote sensitive re-use of historical assets and buildings of local historic interest, where the opportunity arises? Will it improve and broaden access to, and understanding of, local heritage and historic sites? Will it maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements?
17. To conserve and enhance the quality, distinctiveness and diversity of Northumberland's rural and urban landscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land? Will it conserve and enhance the County's townscapes, seascapes and landscape character? Will it protect and enhance natural landscapes within the urban area, including recreational open space and strategic green corridors? Will it help to deliver a comprehensive network of multifunctional Green Infrastructure, addressing deficiencies and gaps and providing Green Infrastructure with new development where appropriate? Will it conserve and enhance areas with landscape designations and take account of their management objectives? Will it protect the strategic function of the Green Belt? Will it maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements? Will it improve access to the countryside for recreation? Will it promote high quality design in context with its urban and rural landscape?

The Draft Local Plan vision and spatial principles have been assessed for their compatibility with the SA objectives above. The development requirements, spatial strategy and plan policies have been appraised using matrices to identify likely significant effects on the SA objectives. A qualitative scoring system has been adopted which is set out in **Table NTS 3**.

Table NTS 3 Scoring System Used in the Appraisal of the Local Plan

Score	Description	Symbol
Significant Positive Effect	The proposed option/policy contributes significantly to the achievement of the objective.	++
Minor Positive Effect	The proposed option/policy contributes to the achievement of the objective but not significantly.	+
Neutral	The proposed option/policy does not have any effect on the achievement of the objective	0
Minor Negative Effect	The proposed option/policy detracts from the achievement of the objective but not significantly.	-
Significant Negative Effect	The proposed option/policy detracts significantly from the achievement of the objective.	--
No Relationship	There is no clear relationship between the proposed option/policy and the achievement of the objective or the relationship is negligible.	~
Uncertain	The proposed option/policy has an uncertain relationship to the objective or the relationship is dependent on the way in which the aspect is managed. In addition, insufficient information may be available to enable an appraisal to be made.	?

NB: where more than one symbol/colour is presented in a box it indicates that the appraisal has identified both positive and negative effects. Where a box is coloured but also contains a '?', this indicates uncertainty over whether the effect could be a minor or significant effect although a professional judgement is expressed in the colour used. A conclusion of uncertainty arises where there is insufficient evidence for expert judgement to conclude an effect.

The proposed housing site allocations and reasonable alternatives have been appraised against the SA objectives that comprise the SA Framework using tailored appraisal criteria and associated thresholds of significance and also wider work which the Council has undertaken as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The proposed employment site allocations and reasonable alternatives have been appraised using specific criteria which relate back to a wider assessment process undertaken as part of the Council's Employment Land Review (ELR). The proposed minerals sites and reasonable alternatives have also been appraised against separate criteria.

Section 4 of this SA Report provides further information concerning the approach to the appraisal of the Draft Local Plan.

What are the Findings of the Appraisal of the Draft Local Plan?

Local Plan Spatial Vision and Objectives

The Vision for Northumberland to 2036 contained in the Draft Local Plan is reproduced in **Box NTS 1** below.

Box NTS 1: Local Plan Spatial Vision

'Northumberland's physical and cultural identity will be conserved and nurtured; its resources will be utilised in a sustainable way. The breadth, scale and quality of its special, varied landscapes and biodiversity will be conserved, enhanced and increased. The quality of its buildings and spaces will be conserved and improved. New development will be well designed, minimise environmental harm and reduce the effects of climate change.'

'The economy will be thriving and competitive, and deliver more and better jobs. Supported by investment and infrastructure, building on existing strengths whilst diversifying and realising the potential of the rural and visitor economy.'

'The health and wellbeing of the county's people and communities will be safeguarded by continually improving education and skills, and ensuring access to decent, affordable homes, services and facilities is secured.'

The spatial vision is supported by 8 objectives covering the following topics:

- Economy and Jobs;
- Homes;
- Environment;
- Connections;
- Community Health and Wellbeing;
- Climate Change;
- Resources; and
- Quality of Place.

The Draft Local Plan vision and objectives above have been tested for their compatibility with the SA objectives.

The vision for the County seeks to deliver economic and social transformation whilst protecting and enhancing the environment. Reflecting its emphasis on these three strands of sustainability, the vision has been assessed as being compatible with the majority of the SA objectives, although the appraisal has found that it does leave room for uncertainties as potential conflicts could arise between growth, resource use and environmental factors.

The appraisal has found the Draft Local Plan objectives to be broadly supportive of the SA objectives. Where possible incompatibilities have been identified, tensions between the objectives can be resolved if development takes place in accordance with all of the Draft Local Plan objectives and policies. As such, an incompatibility is not necessarily an insurmountable issue.

A summary of the completed compatibility assessment is presented in Section 5.2 of this SA Report.

Development Requirements and Spatial Strategy

Policy HOU2 (Provision of New Residential Development) sets out the net additional dwelling target for Northumberland over the plan period 2016-36 which is for at least 17,700 dwellings and 885 dwellings per annum.

The total amount of employment land in the Draft Local Plan is 242ha (41ha on strategic sites and 201ha of generally available employment land (of which approximately 78ha is new employment land allocated)). This is a lower figure than that in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and reflects that less land is available at the Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area than initially thought and that following recent development on existing employment sites, there is now less employment land available for development.

The development requirements and spatial strategy together form the overarching strategy for the Local Plan and have been appraised against the SA objectives. Their selection reflects consideration of a range of growth and distribution options (see sections and Tables NTS 4 and NTS 5 below). These preferred options for development and the spatial strategy have been selected as they will provide sufficient housing to exceed the Local Housing Need, support wider growth ambitions related to the North East Strategic Economic Plan, the Council's economic strategy, North of Tyne devolution deal and the Borderlands Initiative with Cumbria and neighbouring authorities in Scotland. The spatial strategy seeks to allocate development to the most sustainable locations in the County (main towns, service centres and service villages) which can accommodate additional development to meet local needs and grow in a sustainable manner.

Table NTS 4 summarises the findings of the appraisal and identifies the cumulative likely significant effects of the Local Plan strategy.

Table NTS 4 Summary of the Appraisal of the Development Requirements and Spatial Strategy

SA Objective	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Objective 6	Objective 7	Objective 8	Objective 9	Objective 10	Objective 11	Objective 12	Objective 13	Objective 14	Objective 15	Objective 16	Objective 17
Housing provision (17,700 dwellings)	++/-	+	+/?	++	+	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/- /?	-	-	0/?	-	--	+/-	+/-
Employment provision (242ha)	+/-	+	+/?	0/+ /?	++	+	+/-	-	-	+/-	-	+/-	0/?	-	-	+/-	+/-
Spatial strategy	+/-	+	0	++	++	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/- /?	-	+/-	0/?	+/-	-	+/-	+/-
Cumulative Effect of the Development Requirements	+/-	+	+/?	++	++	+/-	+/-	-	-	+/- /?	-	+/-	0/?	+/-	-	+/-	+/-

The delivery of 17,700 dwellings (albeit that much of this represents existing housing sites carried forward and sites in neighbourhood plans, with only a relatively small number of new sites allocated in the Draft Local Plan), and 242ha of employment land (41ha on strategic sites and 201ha of generally available employment land) for employment uses is expected to have significant positive effects on housing (SA Objective 4) and the economy (SA Objective 5). Focusing this growth in the main towns, service centres and service villages should ensure that prospective residents and workers have good access to key services and facilities by virtue of the wide range of services and facilities these settlements provide and their good transport links. It is also anticipated that growth will promote investment in additional facilities, services and infrastructure. This is expected to help promote the regeneration of PDL sites and urban renaissance and address deprivation whilst minimising the need to travel by car and promoting walking and cycling. Positive effects have therefore also been identified in respect of community services and facilities (SA objective 2) and in part on education and training (SA objective 6), transport (SA objective 7), encouraging the efficient use of land (SA objective 10). The environmental protection provided by the plan will help to have minor positive effects in part on cultural heritage (SA objective 16) and landscape (SA objective 17).

Growth across the County is likely to have a range of adverse environmental and social effects during both the construction and operation of new development arising from, for example, land take, disturbance (e.g. noise), increased vehicle movements and associated emissions to air, the use of energy and resources, the generation of waste and impacts on landscape and townscape character. These adverse effects are likely to be minimised through the implementation of Local Plan policies and mitigation at the site level and are not considered likely to be significant.

Negative effects have been identified for SA objectives 8 and 9, 11 and 15, with significant negative effects on objective 15 from the housing provision which is reflective of the associated waste provision from the scale of this housing provision.

There are also positive and negative effects across a number of the SA objectives. For example this reflects that PDL will be used for part of the development requirements but there will also be some loss of greenfield land and some limited Green Belt releases for employment uses.

Detailed matrices containing the appraisals of the development requirements and Spatial Strategy are presented in Appendix E which is in a separate document which accompanies this report. The findings of these appraisals are summarised in Section 5.3 of the SA Report.

Growth Options

Four housing and growth options have been considered by the Council:

- **Option 1:** Baseline business as usual;
- **Option 2:** Local housing need standard method;
- **Option 3:** Intermediate jobs-led growth; and
- **Option 4:** Ambitious jobs-led growth.

These options have been appraised against the SA objectives. **Table NTS 5** summarises the findings of the appraisal of these growth options.

Table NTS 5 Summary of the Appraisal of the Housing and Employment Growth Options

SA Objective	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Objective 6	Objective 7	Objective 8	Objective 9	Objective 10	Objective 11	Objective 12	Objective 13	Objective 14	Objective 15	Objective 16	Objective 17
Option 1: Baseline 'business as usual'	+	+	+	+/-	?/-	?	+/-	+/- /?	-	+/-	-	-	0/?	-	-	+/-	+/-
Option 2: Local housing need standard method.	++	++	++	+/?	+/?	?	++/ --	++/ --/?	--	+/-	--	--	0/?	--	--	+/-	+/-
Option 3: Intermediate jobs-led growth.	++	++	++	++	++	?	++/ --	++/ --/?	--	++/ --	--	--	0/?	--	--	+/-	+/-
Option 4: Ambitious jobs-led growth.	++	++	++	++	++	?	++/ --	++/ --/?	--	++/ --	--	--	0/?	--	--	+/-	+/-

The Council commissioned independent analyses to ascertain how economic growth may further impact on the County's future population and the housing requirement. The 'business as usual' growth option (Option 1) provides a level of growth that is below the minimum housing need figure for Northumberland and is therefore included for reference and comparison purposes only.

The alternative growth scenario options are listed above (Options 2, 3 and 4). The minimum local housing need figure (Option 2) only considers the projected household growth and affordability, and so does not in itself take account of wider economic growth options.

In recognition of the Council's economic ambitions which are linked to Northumberland contributing to delivering the objectives of the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), the North of Tyne devolution deal and the Borderlands Initiative, together with completed, committed and proposed infrastructure improvements, the Council has considered that there is sufficient justification to have a total housing figure in excess of the standard methodology figure that delivers on an ambitious level of growth.

In consequence, the Council has taken forward the ambitious jobs-led growth scenario (Option 4) as the preferred scenario which is 17,700 dwellings over the plan period at an average of 885 per annum as the preferred housing requirement.

The full appraisal of these four options is contained in Appendix F which is in a separate document which accompanies this report. The findings of the appraisal of these options are summarised in Section 5.3 of the SA Report along with the reasons for the selection of the preferred option and for not selecting the other options.

Spatial Development Options

Five spatial development options have been considered by the Council for the dispersal of growth throughout the County:

- **Distribution Option 1:** Proportionate Distribution;
- **Distribution Option 2:** Proportionate Distribution within the Constraints of the Green Belt (this is the preferred approach in the Draft Local Plan);
- **Distribution Option 3:** Proportionate Distribution with Additional Targeted Growth;
- **Distribution Option 4:** Dispersed distribution; and
- **Distribution Option 5:** New Settlements.

These options have been appraised against the SA objectives. **Table NTS 6** summarises the findings of the appraisal of these growth options.

Table NTS 6 Summary of the Appraisal of the Preferred Spatial Development Option and Reasonable Alternatives

SA Objective	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Objective 6	Objective 7	Objective 8	Objective 9	Objective 10	Objective 11	Objective 12	Objective 13	Objective 14	Objective 15	Objective 16	Objective 17
Option 1 Proportionate Distribution	+/ - /?	+	~	+	+	+	+	+/ --	--	+/ --	+/ /?	+/ --	+/ -	+/ --	+/ --	+	+
Option 2 Proportionate Distribution within the constraints of the Green Belt	+ /- /?	+	~	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Option 3 Proportionate Distribution with Additional Targeted Growth	+ /- /?	+	~	+	+	+	+	+	--	+	+	--	+	+	+	+	+

SA Objective	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Objective 6	Objective 7	Objective 8	Objective 9	Objective 10	Objective 11	Objective 12	Objective 13	Objective 14	Objective 15	Objective 16	Objective 17
Option 4 - Dispersed Distribution	+ /- /?	+	~	+	+	+	+	+	--	+	+	--	+	+	+	+	+
Option 5: New Settlements	+ /- /?	+	~	+	+	+	+	+	--	--	+	--	+	+	+	+	+

Option 2 is the Council's preferred option for the distribution of development in the County in the Draft Local Plan. This option has been selected as it will facilitate the distribution of development to the most sustainable locations in the County, whilst also respecting the constraints of the Green Belt which covers large areas of the south of the County.

The distribution options identified are all expected to have significant positive effects on housing (SA Objective 4) by providing new housing across Northumberland, except for Option 5, as the option would only provide development in new settlements to the detriment of meeting need elsewhere in the County (and that the amount of housing that would be provided could be affected by Green Belt constraints). All of the options will have positive effects on the range and accessibility of community services and facilities (SA Objective 2), economy (SA Objective 5) and the delivery and accessibility of educational facilities (SA Objective 6) by encouraging the creation of new development across the County. However, Option 4 is expected to have a minor positive effect rather than a significant positive effect, due to it mainly concentrating new development in rural areas. Options 1, 2 and 3 would result in considerable positive effects with regard to reducing the need to travel within the County (SA Objective 7) as new developments are located near to key settlements and where they are needed. Option 4 and 5 would only have minor positive effects due to the focusing of developments in rural areas (and countryside in the case of the new settlement) that are less accessible and often require greater use of the car. However, each of the five options are likely to result in more traffic upon Northumberland's road network.

Minor negative effects have also been identified for SA objectives 1, 11, 13, 16 with significant negative effects anticipated on SA objectives 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 17. These are negative effects in part as there are also positive effects on these objectives except for SA objectives 9 and 12. The creation of new developments will have an effect on the natural environment and its associated assets, though this will be mitigated to an extent by locating developments in sustainable locations. Option 2 has overall less negative effects than the other options due to it resulting in the loss of the smallest amount of Green Belt land, whilst the other options are expected to have more of an adverse effect on the Green Belt and in turn land use (SA Objective 10). Under Option 5, if new settlements were to be located close to key employment centres (primarily those in the south east of Northumberland and the Tyneside conurbation), this could result in the greatest loss of Green Belt land which could also have a significant negative effect on landscape (SA objective 17). Options 3, 4 and 5 would increase the amount of traffic on Northumberland's local road network more than Options 1 and 2 due to either requiring more development than the other options (Option 3) or by locating development in rural areas where there would be less access to sustainable modes of transport (Option 4) or being the source of new traffic (Option 5). This will result in Options 3, 4 and 5 having a significant negative effect on air quality whilst Options 1 and 2 do have positive effects in part on air quality.

The full appraisal of these five options is contained in Appendix G (which is in a separate document which accompanies this report). The findings of the appraisal of these options are summarised in Section 5.3 of the SA Report, along with the reasons for the selection of the preferred option and for not selecting the other options.

Site Allocations

The Draft Local Plan has allocated 36 housing sites, 4 employment sites and 7 aggregate minerals sites. These sites have been selected through wider work on the SHLAA process, the Employment Land Review, and a recent call for sites exercise. No waste sites have been allocated in the plan and there are no Gypsy and Traveller sites allocated either. Existing waste management facilities and services have capacity to cater for additional waste produced over the plan period. There is a need for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots over the plan period, although the Council's updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment suggests that these will be needed over the medium term with existing sites likely to have potential to accommodate some additional pitches and plots, such that the location of any additional provision for these communities will be considered at the first review of the Local Plan after adoption. On this basis no Gypsy and Traveller sites have been allocated in the Local Plan.

Overall, the scale of housing and employment land (both new sites and land carried forward from the former District and Borough Local Plans) to be delivered through the proposed site allocations within the Draft Local Plan is considered to be significant and will help to meet the future needs of the County, its communities and businesses over the plan period whilst minimising the potential for significant adverse environmental effects. This reflects both the characteristics of individual sites and also the fact that the majority of dwellings and employment land will be delivered in/adjacent to urban areas for the main towns and sustainable settlements, which have greater capacity in terms of their sustainability to receive growth. Overall, significant positive effects have therefore been identified in respect of health (SA objective 1), community services and facilities (SA objective 2), housing (SA objective 4), and the economy (SA objective 5) although cumulatively development could place pressure on key services and facilities (if unmitigated).

The minerals sites will ensure there is a supply of natural resources to meet needs and will help to provide for example a supply of local building materials for construction needs. This will have sustainability benefits as it will help to reduce the need for importing such materials and in turn reduce associated HGV movements, which will also have positive benefits from reduced vehicle emissions (SA objectives 12 and 14). Development of new minerals sites in accordance with plan requirements for environmental safeguards will help to ensure that the minerals sites do not have any adverse effects on the County's environment. Additional minerals sites will also help to strengthen and sustain the economy of Northumberland (SA objective 5).

There is the potential for new development to result in adverse environmental effects (and in some cases, significant negative effects). However, in many cases (such as in respect of biodiversity, water, flood risk, cultural heritage and landscape (SA objectives 8, 11, 13, 16 and 17)) it is anticipated that the potential adverse effects could be mitigated or reduced at the project level. In this context, the application of Local Plan policies when considering planning applications for the development of allocated sites will help minimise adverse effects and enhance positive effects associated with delivery.

Whilst the Draft Local Plan allocates a number of previously developed (PDL) sites, cumulatively development will result in the loss of a substantial area of greenfield land and some limited Green Belt releases for employment. In consequence, there is the potential for significant positive and negative effects on landscape (SA objective 17).

In addition to those sites allocated in the plan for housing, employment and minerals, there are a number of sites with existing planning permission (or minded to approve) which are expected to deliver part of the overall development requirements. As these sites already have consent and are therefore already deemed to be suitable for development they have not been assessed as part of this SA report.

The assessment of the housing and employment land, and minerals allocations and reasonable alternatives to these allocations are available online on the Council's website at:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>

The findings of the appraisal of the proposed housing, employment and minerals land allocations are summarised in Section 5.5 of the SA Report.

Plan Policies

To support the overall strategy for development, the Draft Local Plan includes 102 policies across the following chapters:

- Delivering the Vision for Northumberland (9 policies);
- Economy (17 policies);
- Town Centres and Central Services (6 policies);
- Housing (12 policies);
- Quality of Place (6 policies);
- Connectivity and Movement (10 policies);
- Environment (9 policies);
- Water Environment (5 policies);
- Pollution and Land Quality (3 policies);
- Managing Natural Resources (19 policies); and
- Infrastructure, Implementation and Delivery (6 policies).

A number of minor modifications to the policies in the Publication Draft Local Plan are proposed by the Council relating to points of clarification, factual updates and typographical or grammatical errors. A number of these have arisen from representations received on the Publication Draft Local Plan. The performance of these proposed minor changes to certain policies has been tested against the 17 SA objectives (note that **Table NTS 7** shows the anticipated cumulative effects of each plan chapter against the SA objectives). The cumulative effects on the SA objectives resulting from all chapters has also been assessed.

Table NTS 7 Summary of the Cumulative Effects of the Local Plan Policies

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	Cumulative effect of the draft policies
1. Health and Wellbeing: To improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.	++/-	+/-/?	+	++/-	++/-	++/-	+	+	++/+	+	++/+	++/-
2. Community Services and Facilities: To improve the quality, range and accessibility of community services and facilities.	++/+	+/0	++	++/+	+/~	+	~	~	+	+/0	++	++/+
3. Community safety: To deliver safer communities.	++/+	~	+	++/+/?	+/~	+/-	~	+	+	+/0	~	+

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	Cumulative effect of the draft policies
4. Housing: To ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home.	++/-	+	+	++	++/+	~	+	+/0	~	+	+/~	++
5. Economy: To strengthen and sustain a resilient local economy which offers local employment opportunities.	++/+ /-	++	++	+	+/~	++	+	~	+	++/+	+	++
6. Education: To deliver accessible education and training opportunities.	+/-	++/ +/0	0	+/-	+	+	~	~	~	+/0	+	++/+
7. Travel: To reduce the need for travel, promote more sustainable modes of transport and align investment in infrastructure with growth.	++/-	+/- /?	++	+/0/-	+	++	~	~	+	+/- /0	+/~	++/-

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	Cumulative effect of the draft policies
8. Biodiversity: To conserve and enhance Northumberland's biodiversity and geodiversity.	++/-	+/?	0/?	+/-	++	+/-/?	++	++/+	+	+	+	++/-
9. Natural Resources: To ensure the prudent use and supply of natural resources.	++/-	+/-/?	~	+/-	++/+	+/-/?	+	~	++	+/-	+/~	++/-
10. Land Use: To encourage the efficient use of land.	++/-	+/-	++/-/?	+/-	+	+/-/?	~	~	++	+/0	+/~	++/- -
11. Water Quality: To protect and enhance the quality of Northumberland's river, transitional and coastal and ground and surface water bodies.	+/-	+/0/?	+/0/?	+/0	+	+/-	++	++	+	+/0/-	+/~	+

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	Cumulative effect of the draft policies
12. Air Quality: To improve air quality.	++/	+/-/?	++/?	+/-	+	++/-/?	+	~	+	+/0	+/~	+/-
13. Flood Risk: To reduce and or avoid flood risk to people and property.	++/?	+/-/?	++/?	+/0/-	++/+	+/--	~	++	++	++/-	+/~	++/-
14. Climate Change: To minimise greenhouse gases and ensure resilience to the effects of climate change through effective mitigation and adaptation.	++/-	+/-/?	++/?	+/0/-	++/+	+/--	~	++	++	++/-	+/~	++/-
15. Waste: To reduce the amount of waste that is produced and increase the proportion that is reused, recycled and composted.	++/-	+/-/?	++/?	+/--	++/+	-	~	~	++/+	~	+/~	++/-

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	Cumulative effect of the draft policies
16. Cultural Heritage: To conserve and enhance Northumberland's cultural heritage and diversity.	++/-	+/0/?	+/0/?	+/-	++	+/-/?	++	+	+	+	+/~	++/-
17. Landscape: To conserve and enhance the quality, distinctiveness and diversity of Northumberland's rural and urban landscapes.	++/-	+/-/?	+/-/?	+/-	++	+/-/?	++	+	+	+/~	+/~	++/-

The implementation of the proposed policies contained in the Draft Local Plan is anticipated to have positive effects across all of the SA objectives. These effects are expected to be significant in respect of: health and wellbeing, community services and facilities, housing, economy, education, and partly for travel, natural resources, land use climate change, cultural heritage, and landscape.

This broadly reflects the likely social and economic benefits associated with the delivery of housing and employment in the County over the plan period and the strong framework provided by the plan policies that will help to conserve the County's natural and built environments and resources, and the promotion of sustainable modes of transport. The policies will help to deliver well designed developments which will have a range of positive effects on the SA objectives. Good design will help to improve health and wellbeing, ensure access to good quality homes and help to protect and enhance the environment.

Despite the overall positive cumulative effects associated with the implementation of the Draft Local Plan policies, cumulative negative effects on the SA objectives have also been identified against some SA objectives including: travel, biodiversity, natural resources, air quality, climate change, cultural heritage, and landscape. This principally reflects impacts associated with the construction and operation of new housing and employment uses including resource use and emissions. However, where negative effects have been identified, it is expected that those policies of the Draft Local Plan which seek to conserve and enhance the County's natural and built environment and protect its resources will help to minimise adverse effects.

Significant cumulative negative effects have been identified in part for waste, land use and landscape. This relates to waste generation and land take associated with the new development proposed through the Draft Local Plan, and associated loss of landscape character as there will be loss of greenfield land and some limited Green Belt releases for employment land.

Detailed matrices containing the appraisal of the Local Plan policies are presented in Appendix J which is in a separate document which accompanies this SA Report. The findings of these appraisals are summarised in Section 5.5 of this SA Report.

Mitigation and Enhancement

The SA is being undertaken iteratively alongside and informing the development of the Local Plan. In this context, a number of mitigation measures were identified at the Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan stages (which are set out in **Appendix I** which is in a separate document accompanying this report). At the Regulation 19 stage mitigation measures were recommended for two policies (ECN1 and ECN5). These remain as recommendations in this SA Report for the Council's consideration prior to adoption of the Local Plan. These mitigation measures (including suggested changes to the policy wording) are set out in detail in **Section 5.6** of this report.

Next Steps

The Draft Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State (together with this May 2019 SA Report) and will then be subject to independent examination.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 Northumberland County Council (the Council) is currently preparing a new Local Plan¹¹ for Northumberland. The Local Plan will set out the vision, objectives, planning policies and site allocations that will guide development in the County to 2036.
- 1.1.2 The first stage in the development of the Draft Local Plan was the publication of a Draft Local Plan for consultation from 4th of July to 15th of August 2018. This included a number of strategic options concerning the quantum of land to be provided for housing and employment and the spatial distribution of development in the County and site allocations for housing, and employment to support this stage of the preparation of the Local Plan. Following consultation, and analysis of responses the Council then prepared the Publication Draft Local Plan which also included a number of strategic options concerning the quantum of land to be provided for housing and employment and the spatial distribution of development in the County and site allocations for housing, employment and minerals to support this stage of the preparation of the Local Plan. Representations on the Publication Draft Local Plan were invited between 30th January and 13th of March 2019 and following analysis of the responses received, minor modifications were made to some policies. Following this, the Draft Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration at examination by an independent Inspector.
- 1.1.3 Wood Environment and Infrastructure Solutions Ltd. (Wood) has been commissioned by the Council to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Local Plan. The SA will appraise the environmental, social and economic performance of the Local Plan and any reasonable alternatives. In doing so, it will help to inform the selection of Plan options concerning (in particular) the quantum, distribution and location of future development in the County and identify measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate any potential negative effects that may arise from the Plan's implementation as well as opportunities to improve the contribution of the Local Plan towards sustainability.
- 1.1.4 An SA has been undertaken for each iteration of the Local Plan. In this context, an appraisal has been completed of the Draft Local Plan and a SA Report¹² documenting the findings of the appraisal have been issued for consultation alongside the relevant version of the Draft Local Plan.
- 1.1.5 This report presents the findings of the SA of the Draft Local Plan.

1.2 Purpose of this SA Report

- 1.2.1 Under Section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council is required to carry out a SA of the Local Plan to help guide the selection and development of policies and proposals in terms of their potential social, environmental and economic effects. In undertaking this requirement, local planning authorities must also incorporate the requirements of European Union Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, and its

¹¹ References in this report to Draft Local Plan refers to the Publication Draft Local Plan plus the schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications to the Publication Draft (Regulation 19) Local Plan

¹² Wood (2018) *Northumberland Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal: Regulation 18 Consultation Sustainability Appraisal Report* and Wood (2019) *Northumberland Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal: Regulation 19 Consultation Sustainability Appraisal Report*.

transposing regulations the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (statutory instrument 2004 No. 1633) (the SEA Regulations).

- 1.2.2 The SEA Directive and transposing regulations seek to provide a high level of protection of the environment by integrating environmental considerations into the process of preparing certain plans and programmes. The aim of the SEA Directive is *"to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."*
- 1.2.3 At paragraph 16, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)¹³ sets out that local plans should be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development¹⁴ In this context, paragraph 32 of the NPPF reiterates the requirement for SA/SEA as it relates to local plan preparation:
- "Local plans and spatial development strategies should be informed throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal that meets the relevant legal requirements.¹⁵ This should demonstrate how the plan has addressed relevant economic, social and environmental objectives (including opportunities for net gains). Significant adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed (or, where this is not possible, compensatory measures should be considered)."*
- 1.2.4 The Planning Practice Guidance (Plan-making paragraph 037¹⁶) also makes clear that SA plays an important role in demonstrating that a local plan reflects sustainability objectives and has considered reasonable alternatives. In this regard, SA will help to ensure that a local plan is *"justified"*, a key test of soundness that concerns the extent to which the plan provides an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence.
- 1.2.5 In this context, SA is an integral part of the preparation of the Local Plan. SA of the Local Plan will help to ensure that the likely social, economic and environmental effects of the Plan are identified, described and appraised. Where negative effects are identified, measures will be proposed to avoid, minimise or mitigate such effects. Where any positive effects are identified, measures will be considered that could enhance such effects. SA will also help to inform the selection of plan options by appraising reasonable alternatives in respect of, in particular, different volumes of growth, spatial distributions and site allocations.
- 1.2.6 Specifically, this SA Report sets out:
- An overview of the Draft Northumberland Local Plan;
 - A review of relevant international, national, regional, sub-regional and local plans, policies and programmes;
 - Baseline information for the Local Plan area across key sustainability topics;
 - Key economic, social and environmental issues relevant to the appraisal of the Local Plan;

¹³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019) *National Planning Policy Framework*. Available from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779764/NPPF_Feb_2019_web.pdf [Accessed May 2019].

¹⁴ This is a legal requirement of local planning authorities exercising their plan-making functions (section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004).

¹⁵ The reference to relevant legal requirements in the NPPF relates to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

¹⁶ Planning Practice Guidance, Reference ID 61-037-20190315 (Revision date: 15/03/2019)

- The approach to undertaking the appraisal of the Draft Local Plan;
- The findings of the appraisal of the Draft Local Plan; and
- Conclusions and an overview of the next steps in the SA process.

1.3 The Northumberland Local Plan – An Overview

Requirement to Prepare a Local Plan

- 1.3.1 Paragraph 15 of the NPPF states that the planning system should be genuinely plan-led, and that *"Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings."*
- 1.3.2 Paragraph 20 states that Local Plans should include strategic policies that set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision (in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development) for:
- "a) Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;*
 - b) Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
 - c) Community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and*
 - d) Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation."*
- 1.3.3 The Planning Practice Guidance clarifies (at paragraph 001 'Plan-making'¹⁷) that plans should *"set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places"*.

Scope and Content of the Northumberland Local Plan

- 1.3.4 The current Development Plan for Northumberland consists of saved policies from various Development Plan Documents, alongside Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and adopted Neighbourhood Plans. This is shown in **Box 1**.

Box 1: Development Plan Documents and SPD

Development Plan Documents:

- Alnwick District Council (1997) Alnwick District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction, 2007).
- Alnwick District Council (2007) Alnwick District Core Strategy.
- Blyth Valley Borough Council (1999) Blyth Valley District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction, 2007).
- Blyth Valley Borough Council (2007) Blyth Valley Core Strategy.
- Blyth Valley Borough Council (2007) Blyth Valley Development Control Policies DPD.
- Castle Morpeth Borough Council (2003) Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction, 2007).

¹⁷ Planning Practice Guidance, Reference ID 61-001-20190315 (Revision date: 15/03/2019)

Box 1: Development Plan Documents and SPD

- Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan (2005) – Saved policy S5.
- Northumberland Minerals Local Plan (2000).
- Northumberland Waste Local Plan (December 2001).
- Tynedale District Council (2000) Tynedale District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction, 2007).
- Tynedale District Council (2007) Tynedale Core Strategy.
- Wansbeck District Council (2007) Wansbeck District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction, 2010).

Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Alnwick Landscape Character Assessment SPD (2010).
- Alnwick Planning for Renewable Energy SPD (2009).
- Ashington Town Centre SPD (2010).
- Bedlington Conservation Area Management Strategy SPD (2011).
- Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy.
- Blyth Commissioners Quay Development Brief (2008).
- Blyth Dun Cow Quay Development Brief (2008).
- Blyth Bus Depot Development Brief (2008).
- Blyth Supermarket Site Development Brief (2008).
- Blyth Bates Colliery Strategic Development Guide (August 2008).
- Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Conservation Area Management Strategy SPD (2009).
- Wansbeck Provision for Sport and Play SPD.
- Wansbeck Design Guide (February 2009).
- Wansbeck Residential Development Design Guidance (February 2009).
- Wansbeck Residential Extension Design Guidance (February 2009).

Neighbourhood Plans:

- Acomb Neighbourhood Plan (February 2019)
- Allendale Neighbourhood Plan (July 2015).
- Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan (July 2017).
- Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan (October 2018).
- Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan (May 2016).
- North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan (July 2018).
- Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan (November 2017).
- Stanington Neighbourhood Plan (September 2018).
- Whittington Neighbourhood Plan (November 2018).

- 1.3.5 The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan for Northumberland that will, once adopted, replace the saved policies from the former District and County Local Plans and the Core Strategies and other Development Documents that were adopted by the former Districts in Northumberland prior to amalgamation into one combined authority.

Preparation of the Local Plan

- 1.3.6 The Council's approved Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for production of the Local Plan in accordance with the requirements for plan production set out in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). The updated plan preparation milestones are detailed in **Table 1.1**

Table 1.1 Local Plan Preparation Milestones¹⁸

Stage of Plan Preparation	Indicative Timescales
Consult on draft SA Scoping Report with appropriate consultation bodies	March 2018
Consult on Draft Local Plan along with SA Report Interim SA Report (Reg 18)	July-August 2018
Consult on Publication Draft Local Plan along with Interim SA Report (Reg 19)	January 2019 to March 2019
Submit the Draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State along with final SA Report	May 2019
Examination of Local Plan	September 2019
Adoption of Local Plan	March 2020

- 1.3.7 Adoption of the Local Plan is due to take place in 2020. This will have been preceded by two principal periods of consultation during which the Local Plan will be developed and refined taking into account (inter-alia) national planning policy and guidance, the Council's evidence base, the outcomes of consultation and the findings of socio-economic and environmental assessments and appraisal including SA, prior to submission to the Secretary of State and subsequent examination in public.

The Local Plan

- 1.3.8 The first major stage in the development of the Local Plan was the publication of a Draft Local Plan for consultation from 4th of July to 15th of August 2018. This included a number of strategic options concerning the quantum of land to be provided for housing and employment and the spatial distribution of development in the County and site allocations for housing, and employment to support this stage of the preparation of the Local Plan. Following consultation, and an analysis of responses, the Council then prepared the Publication Draft Local Plan which also included a number of strategic options concerning the quantum of land to be provided for housing and employment and the spatial distribution of development in the County and site allocations for housing, employment and minerals. Representations were invited on the Publication Draft Local Plan between 30th January and 13th of March 2019 and following analysis of consultation responses, minor modifications were made to the Publication Draft Local Plan. These included some suggested minor wording changes to policies STP1, ECN6, and deletion of two criteria from Policy HOU2 but the spatial strategy, and housing and employment land targets remain the same as those in the Publication Draft Local Plan. Following the finalisation of these modifications, the Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent planning Inspector.
- 1.3.9 The Draft Local Plan comprises of the following core components:
- The Local Plan vision and objectives;
 - The overarching Local Plan strategy in terms of the amount of new development to be accommodated in the County (development requirements) and how it will be accommodated (the Spatial Strategy);
 - Proposed site allocations to deliver the development requirements across the County; and
 - Plan policies including development requirements for the proposed site allocations.

¹⁸ Local Development Scheme 2018-2021 (April 2018).

Local Plan Vision and Objectives

- 1.3.10 The vision and objectives are unchanged from the Initial Local Plan. The Local Plan vision is reproduced in **Box 2** below.

Box 2: Local Plan Vision

'Northumberland's physical and cultural identity will be conserved and nurtured; its resources will be utilised in a sustainable way. The breadth, scale and quality of its special, varied landscapes and biodiversity will be conserved, enhanced and increased. The quality of its buildings and spaces will be conserved and improved. New development will be well designed, minimise environmental harm and reduce the effects of climate change.

The economy will be thriving and competitive, and deliver more and better jobs. Supported by investment and infrastructure, building on existing strengths whilst diversifying and realising the potential of the rural and visitor economy.

The health and wellbeing of the county's people and communities will be safeguarded by continually improving education and skills, and ensuring access to decent, affordable homes, services and facilities is secured.'

- 1.3.11 The spatial vision is supported by 8 objectives covering the following topics:

- Economy and Jobs;
- Homes;
- Environment;
- Connections;
- Community Health and Wellbeing;
- Climate Change;
- Resources; and
- Quality of Place.

Development Requirements and Spatial Strategy

- 1.3.12 The Draft Local Plan makes provision for 17,700 new dwellings and 242 hectares of employment land (41ha on strategic sites and 201ha of generally available employment land). The spatial strategy seeks to allocate development to the County's most sustainable settlements in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. The total amount of employment land allocated in the Plan reduced to 242ha at the Publication Draft stage reflecting that less land is available for development at the Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area than previously thought, and also other recent development of employment sites.

Proposed Site Allocations

- 1.3.13 A total of 47 proposed site allocations are identified in the Draft Local Plan. The site allocations include: 36 new housing sites, 4 employment sites and 7 aggregates minerals sites and also existing housing and employment commitments with planning permission or with lapsed permissions that have been carried forward and form part of the total amount of development allocated in the plan. The number of new housing sites reduced slightly between the Regulation 18 and 19 Draft Local Plan stages reflecting sites which now have planning consent and a slight redistribution of housing in the west of the County to reflect that a site at Haltwhistle is now not considered to be available.

- 1.3.14 No waste sites have been allocated in the plan and there are no Gypsy and Traveller sites. Existing waste management facilities and services have capacity to cater for additional waste produced over the plan period, with policy criteria to allow for new and enhanced facilities. There is a need for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots over the plan period but the Council's latest Gypsy and Traveller needs assessment shows that these will be needed over the medium term and so the location of any additional provision for these communities will be considered at the first review of the Local Plan after adoption.

Local Plan Policies

- 1.3.15 To support the overall strategy for development, the Draft Local Plan includes 102 policies across the following chapters:
- Delivering the Vision for Northumberland (9 policies);
 - Economy (17 policies);
 - Town Centres and Central Services (6 policies);
 - Housing (12 policies);
 - Quality of Place (6 policies)
 - Connectivity and Movement (10 policies);
 - Environment (9 policies);
 - Water Environment (5 policies);
 - Pollution and Land Quality (3 policies);
 - Managing Natural Resources (19 policies); and
 - Infrastructure, Implementation and Delivery (6 policies).
- 1.3.16 A number of minor modifications to the policies in the Publication Draft Local Plan are proposed by the Council relating to points of clarification, factual updates and typographical or grammatical errors. A number of these have arisen from representations received on the Publication Draft Local Plan,
- 1.3.17 **Appendix K** (which is in a separate document accompanying this report) contains a table listing all of the policies in the Draft Local Plan.
- 1.3.18 Further information in respect of the preparation of the Draft Local Plan is available via the Council's website: www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan

1.4 Stages in the Sustainability Appraisal Process

- 1.4.1 There are five key stages in the SA process and these are highlighted in **Figure 1.1** below together with links to the development of the Local Plan.
- 1.4.2 The first stage (**Stage A**) led to the production of a SA Scoping Report¹⁹. Informed by a review of other relevant policies, plans and programmes as well as baseline information and the identification of key sustainability issues affecting the County, the Scoping Report set out the proposed framework for the appraisal of the Local Plan (the SA Framework).

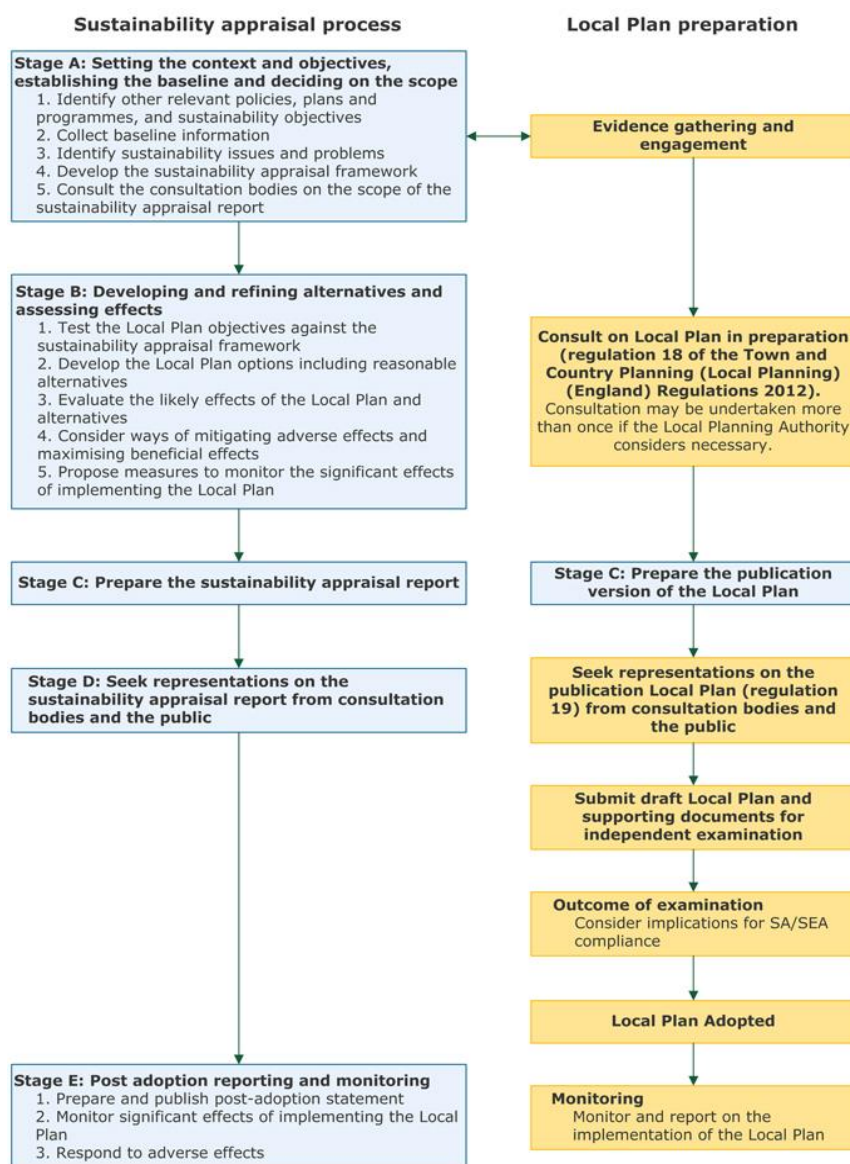
¹⁹ Wood (2018) *Northumberland County Council Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal: Scoping Report*.

- 1.4.3 The Scoping Report was subject to consultation that ran from 28th March to 2nd May 2018. A total of 5 responses were received to the consultation from the statutory SEA consultation bodies (Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England) as well as a range of other stakeholders. Responses related to all aspects of the Scoping Report and resulted in amendments to the SA Framework. **Appendix B** contains a schedule of the consultation responses received to the Scoping Report, the Council's response and the subsequent action taken.
- 1.4.4 **Stage B** of the SA process is iterative and involves the development and refinement of the Local Plan by testing the sustainability strengths and weaknesses of the emerging Plan options, spatial strategy, policies and allocations. In this respect, SA is undertaken throughout the preparation of the Local Plan with the findings presented in a series of interim SA Reports. The Draft Local Plan was subject to appraisal and the resulting SA Report²⁰ (along with the draft plan) was subject to consultation that ran from 4th of July to 15th of August 2018. Only one consultation response on the SA was received (from Natural England) and which was summarised in **Appendix B** of the Regulation 18 Report. The Publication Draft Local Plan was then subject to appraisal and the resulting SA report²¹, which contained the findings of the SA of the Publication Draft Local Plan for Regulation 19, was subject to consultation that ran from 30th of January to 13th of March 2019. Nine consultation responses were received, including the three Statutory SEA consultees (Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England). These are summarised in **Appendix B** (which is in a separate document accompanying this report). This completed **Stage B** of the SA process.
- 1.4.5 A final SA Report has been prepared to accompany the submission of the Draft Local Plan and this completes **Stage C** of the process. This will be available alongside the Local Plan itself for consideration by an independent planning inspector (**Stage D**).
- 1.4.6 Following Examination in Public, and subject to any significant changes to the Submission Draft Local Plan that may require appraisal, the Council will issue a Post Adoption Statement as soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of the Local Plan. This will set out the results of the consultation and SA processes and the extent to which the findings of the SA have been accommodated in the adopted Local Plan. During the period of the Local Plan, the Council will monitor its implementation and any significant social, economic and environmental effects (**Stage E**).

²⁰ Wood (2018) *Northumberland Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal: Regulation 18 Consultation Sustainability Appraisal Report*.

²¹ Wood (2019) *Northumberland Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal: Regulation 19 Consultation Sustainability Appraisal Report*.

Figure 1.1 Stages in the Sustainability Appraisal Process



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2014) *Planning Practice Guidance*.

1.5 Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.5.1 Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations') requires that competent authorities assess the potential impacts of land use plans on the Natura 2000 network of European protected sites²² to determine whether there will be any 'likely significant effects' (LSE) on any European site as a result of the plan's implementation (either alone or 'in combination' with other plans or projects); and, if so, whether these effects will result in

²² Strictly, 'European sites' are any Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from the point at which the European Commission and the UK Government agree the site as a 'Site of Community Importance' (SCI); any classified Special Protection Area (SPA); any candidate SAC (cSAC); and (exceptionally) any other site or area that the Commission believes should be considered as an SAC but which has not been identified by the Government. However, the term is also commonly used when referring to potential SPAs (pSPAs), to which the provisions of Article 4(4) of Directive 2009/147/EC (the 'new wild birds directive') are applied; and to possible SACs (pSACs) and listed Ramsar Sites, to which the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 are applied a matter of Government policy when considering development proposals that may affect them (NPPF para 176). 'European site' is therefore used in this report in its broadest sense, as an umbrella term for all of the above designated sites.

any adverse effects on that site's integrity with reference to the site's conservation objectives. The process by which the effects of a plan or programme on European sites are assessed is known as 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA)²³.

- 1.5.2 In accordance with the Habitats Regulations, what is commonly referred to as a HRA screening exercise has been undertaken to identify the likely impacts of the emerging Local Plan upon European sites, either alone or 'in combination' with other projects or plans, and to consider whether these effects are likely to be significant. Where the possibility of significant effects could not be excluded, a more detailed Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been carried out to determine whether these effects would adversely affect the integrity of European sites.
- 1.5.3 The AA is reported separately from the SA of the Local Plan (although a summary of the findings is included in **Section 5.8** of this report) but importantly has helped to inform the appraisal process, particularly in respect of the potential effects of proposals on biodiversity.

1.6 Structure of this SA Report

- 1.6.1 This SA Report is structured as follows:
- **Non-Technical Summary** - Provides a summary of the SA Report including the findings of the appraisal of the Draft Local Plan;
 - **Section 1: Introduction** - Includes a summary of the Draft Local Plan, an overview of SA, report contents and an outline of how to respond to the consultation;
 - **Section 2: Review of Plans and Programmes** - Provides an overview of the review of those plans and programmes relevant to the Local Plan and SA. The full review is contained at **Appendix C** (which is in a separate document which accompanies this report);
 - **Section 3: Baseline Analysis** - Presents the baseline analysis of the County's social, economic and environmental characteristics and identifies the key sustainability issues that have informed the SA Framework and appraisal;
 - **Section 4: SA Approach** - Outlines the approach to the SA of the Draft Local Plan including the SA Framework;
 - **Section 5: Appraisal of the Draft Local Plan** - Presents a summary of the findings of the appraisal of the Draft Local Plan (with the full appraisal contained in **Appendices E, F, G, , and J**, (which are in a separate document accompanying this report)) and sets out the reasons for the selection of preferred options and for the rejection of reasonable alternatives;
 - **Section 6: Conclusions, Monitoring and Next Steps** - Presents the conclusions of the SA of the Draft Local Plan, an initial monitoring framework and details of the next steps in the appraisal process.
- 1.6.2 This SA Report has been prepared in accordance with the reporting requirements of the SEA Directive and associated Regulations. A Quality Assurance Checklist is presented at **Appendix A** (which is in a separate document accompanying this report).
- 1.6.3 The Draft Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State (together with this May 2019 SA Report) and will then be subject to independent examination.

²³ 'Appropriate Assessment' has been historically used as an umbrella term to describe the process of assessment as a whole. The whole process is now more usually termed 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA), and 'Appropriate Assessment' is used to indicate a specific stage within the HRA.

2. Review of Plans and Programmes

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 One of the first steps in undertaking SA is to identify and review other relevant plans and programmes that could influence the Draft Local Plan. The requirement to undertake a plan and programme review and identify the environmental and wider sustainability objectives relevant to the plan being assessed is set out in the SEA Directive. An 'Environmental Report' required under the SEA Directive should include:

"An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes" to determine "the environmental protection objectives, established at international (European) community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme...and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation" (Annex 1 (a), (e)).

- 2.1.2 Plans and programmes relevant to the Draft Local Plan may be those at an international/ European, UK, national, regional, sub-regional or local level, as relevant to the scope of the document. The review of relevant plans and programmes aims to identify the relationships between the Draft Local Plan and these other documents i.e. how the Draft Local Plan could be affected by the other plans' and programmes' aims, objectives and/or targets, or how it could contribute to the achievement of their sustainability objectives. The review also ensures that the relevant environmental protection and sustainability objectives are integrated into the SA. Additionally, reviewing plans and programmes can provide appropriate information on the baseline for the plan area and help identify the key sustainability issues.
- 2.1.3 The SA Scoping Report included a review of plans and programmes, consistent with the requirements of the SEA Directive, and which was used to inform the development of the SA Framework. This review has been updated as part of the preparation of this SA Report in order to reflect any additional, relevant plans and programmes published since consultation on the Scoping Report took place.

2.2 Review of Plans and Programmes

- 2.2.1 A total of 141 international, national, regional/sub-regional and local level plans and programmes have been reviewed in preparing this Scoping Report. These are listed in **Table 2.1**, with the results of the review provided in **Appendix C** (which is in a separate document which accompanies this report).

Table 2.1 Plans and Programmes Reviewed for the SA of the Local Plan

Plan/Programme
International/European Plans and Programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Commission (EC) (2011) A Resource- Efficient Europe- Flagship Initiative Under the Europe 2020 Strategy, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (COM 2011/21). EC (2013) Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change. European Commission Communication (2013) Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020.

Plan/Programme

- European Landscape Convention 2000 (became binding March 2007).
- European Union (EU) Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC).
- EU Urban Waste-water Treatment (91/271/EEC).
- EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (94/62/EC).
- EU Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC).
- EU Directive on the Landfill of Waste (99/31/EC).
- EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC).
- EU 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (SEA Directive).
- EU Directive 2002/91/EC (2002) Directive 2002/91/EC on the Energy Performance of Buildings.
- EU Environmental Noise Directive (Directive 2002/49/EC).
- EU Bathing Waters Directive 2006/7/EC.
- EU (2006) Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy.
- EU Floods Directive 2007/60/EC.
- EU Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) and previous directives (96/62/EC; 99/30/EC; 2000/69/EC & 2002/3/EC).
- EU Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC).
- EU Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC) & Subsequent Amendments.
- EU Directive on Waste (Directive 75/442/EEC, 2006/12/EC 2008/98/EC as amended).
- EU Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC).
- EU (2006) European Employment Strategy.
- EU (2011) EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 – towards implementation.
- EU (2013) Seventh Environmental Action Programme to 2020 'Living well, within the limits of our planet'.
- EU (2015) Invasive Alien Species Regulation (1143/2014/EU).
- The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention).
- The European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Valetta Convention).
- United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNCCC) (2011) The Cancun Agreement.
- UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972).
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1997) The Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC.
- UNFCCC (2016) The Paris Agreement.
- World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) Our Common Future (The Brundtland Report).
- The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, September 2002 - Commitments arising from Johannesburg Summit (2002).

National Plans and Programmes

- Committee on Climate Change (2017) UK Climate Change Risk Assessment.
- Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (2017) Clean Growth Strategy.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (2001) The Historic Environment: A Force for our Future.
- DCMS (2013) Scheduled Monuments & Nationally Important but Non-Scheduled Monuments.
- DCMS (2015) Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation.
- DCMS (2016) The Culture White Paper.
- DCMS (2017) Heritage Statement.
- Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) (2009) The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan: National Strategy for Climate and Energy.
- Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) (2007) The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Defra (2007) Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests.
- Defra (2008) England Biodiversity Strategy Climate Change Adaptation Principles Conserving Biodiversity in a Changing Climate.
- Defra (2009) Safeguarding Our Soils: A Strategy for England.
- Defra (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services.
- Defra (2011) Natural Environment White Paper: The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature.
- Defra (2012) UK post 2010 Biodiversity Framework.
- Defra (2013) The National Adaptation Programme – Making the Country Resilient to a Changing Climate.
- Defra (2013) Waste Management Plan for England.
- Defra (2013) A Simple Guide to Biodiversity 2020 and Progress Update.

Plan/Programme

- Defra (2013) Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement.
- Defra (2017) Air Quality Plan for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) in UK.
- Department for Education (DFE) (2014) Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance.
- DFE (2016) Strategy 2015 – 2020: World Class Education and Care.
- Environment Agency (2011) National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England.
- Environment Agency (2013) Managing Water Extraction (updated 2016).
- Forestry Commission (2005) Trees and Woodlands Nature's Health Service.
- Forestry Commission (2016) Corporate Plan 2016-2017.
- HM Government (1979) Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act.
- HM Government (1981) Wildlife and Countryside Act.
- HM Government (1990) Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act.
- HM Government (2000) Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- HM Government (2003) Sustainable Energy Act.
- HM Government (2004 and revised 2006) Housing Act.
- HM Government (2005) Securing the future - delivering UK sustainable development strategy.
- HM Government (2006) The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
- HM Government (2008) The Climate Change Act 2008.
- HM Government (2008) The Planning Act.
- HM Government (2009) The UK Renewable Energy Strategy.
- HM Government (2009) Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.
- HM Government (2010) The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England.
- HM Government (2010) Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
- HM Government (2010) White Paper: Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Strategy for Public Health in England.
- HM Government (2011) The Localism Act.
- HM Government (2011) Water for Life: White Paper.
- HM Government (2011) UK Marine Policy Statement.
- HM Government (2011) Carbon Plan: Delivering our Low Carbon Future.
- HM Government (2011) Water for Life, White Paper.
- HM Government (2013) The Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2013.
- HM Government (2014) Water Act.
- HM Government (2015) Water Framework Directive (Standards and Classification) Directions (England and Wales) 2015.
- HM Government (2015) Government Response to the Committee on Climate Change.
- HM Government (2016) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.
- HM Government (2017) The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- HM Government (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment.
- Historic England (2015) Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes 1 to 3.
- Historic England (Various) Advice Notes.
- Historic England (Various) Conservation Areas Site Specific Assessment and Guidance.
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2008) Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing.
- MHCLG (2012) Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.
- MHCLG (2014) Planning Practice Guidance.
- MHCLG (2014) National Planning Policy for Waste.
- MHCLG (2014) Written Statement on Sustainable Drainage Systems.
- MHCLG (2017) Fixing Our Broken Housing Market.
- MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework
- NHS (2014) Five Year Forward View.
- NHS (2017) Next Steps on the Five Year Forward View.

Regional Plans and Programmes

- Ekos Consultants (2016) The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Initiative: 'A Framework for Unlocking our Potential'.
- Environment Agency (2015) Northumbria Region River Basin and Flood Management Plans (2009-2015) (updated in 2015).
- Natural England (2009) State of the Natural Environment in the North East.
- Newcastle International Airport (2013) Masterplan 2013-2030.

Plan/Programme

- Newcastle International Airport (2013) Noise Action Plan.
- Newcastle International Airport (2017) Newcastle International Airport Master Plan 2035 Consultation Draft.
- NHS (2008) Better Health, Fairer Health - A Strategy for 21st Century Health and Well-being in the North East of England.
- North East Climate Change Partnership (2008), North East Climate Change Adaptation Study (study completed by Royal HaskoningDHV on behalf of the partnership).
- North East Local Enterprise Partnership (2017) More and Better Jobs – The North East Strategic Economic Plan.
- Northumbrian Water (2014) Water Resource Management Plan 2015 – 2040.
- Transport for the North (2018) Long Term Rail Strategy Key Messages.
- Transport for the North (2018) Updated Major Roads Report Key Messages.

Sub-Regional (County) Plans and Programmes

- Northumberland County Council (2008) Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan, Policy S5 (Green Belt extension).

Local Plans and Programmes (including neighbouring authority local plans). All published by Northumberland County Council, unless stated otherwise.

- Alnwick District Council (1997) Alnwick District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction, 2007).
- Alnwick District Council (2007) Alnwick District Core Strategy.
- Berwick upon Tweed Council (1999) Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of state's Direction, 2007).
- Blyth Valley Borough Council (1999) Blyth Valley District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction, 2007).
- Blyth Valley Borough Council (2007) Blyth Valley Core Strategy.
- Blyth Valley Borough Council (2007) Blyth Valley Development Control Policies DPD.
- Carlisle District Council (2015) Carlisle District Local Plan 2015-2030.
- Castle Morpeth Borough Council (2003) Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction, 2007).
- Cumbria County Council (2017) Cumbria Mineral and Waste Local 2015-2030 Plan
- Derwentside District Council (1997) Derwentside Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of state's Direction, 2007).
- Durham County Council (2000) Durham Minerals Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of state's Direction, 2007).
- Durham County Council (2005) Durham Waste Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of state's Direction, 2007).
- Eden District Council (2010) Eden Local Plan 2014-2032
- Gateshead Council & Newcastle City Council (2010) Planning for the Future: Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010-2030.
- Gateshead Council (2018) Making Spaces for Growing Places (Submission Draft Plan October 2018).
- Hadrian's Wall Country (2015) Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site Management Plan 2015-2019.
- Joint Local Aggregates Assessment for County Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear (2018).
- Newcastle City Council (2015) Development and Allocations Plan 2015-2030 (submitted for examination March 2019)
- Neighbourhood Plans (Made).
- Neighbourhood Plans (In Progress).
- Northumberland County Council (2000) Northumberland Minerals Local Plan, Written Statement and Proposals Map (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction 2007).
- Northumberland County Council (2001) Northumberland Waste Local Plan, Written Statement and Proposals Map (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction 2007).
- Northumberland County Council (2008) Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Northumberland County Council (2009) Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2 - Scottish Border to River Tyne.
- Northumberland County Council (2010) Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
- Northumberland County Council (2010) North Pennines AONB and European Geopark Geodiversity Action Plan 2010-2015.
- Northumberland County Council (2011) Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011-2026.
- Northumberland County Council (2011) Northumberland Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Final Report.
- Northumberland County Council (2011) Northumberland County Council Renewable, Low-Carbon Energy Generation and Energy Efficiency Study.
- Northumberland County Council (2012) Northumberland Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Plan/Programme

- Northumberland County Council (2012) Northumberland Tenancy Strategy.
- Northumberland County Council (2013) Northumberland Housing Strategy, 2013-2018.
- Northumberland County Council (2013) Strategy for Gypsies and Travellers in Northumberland 2013 to 2016.
- Northumberland County Council (2014) Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan 2014-2019.
- Northumberland County Council (2014) Berwickshire & North Northumberland Coast European Marine Site Management Scheme.
- Northumberland County Council (2014) Northumberland Final Water Resources Management Plan.
- Northumberland County Council (2014) Northumberland Common Allocations Policy – Homefinder.
- Northumberland County Council (2014) Achieving Health and Wellbeing in Northumberland.
- Northumberland County Council (2015) Northumberland Destination Management Plan 2015-2020.
- Northumberland County Council (2018) Northumberland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment - updated.
- Northumberland County Council (2015) Private Sector Housing Strategy 2015-2020.
- Northumberland County Council (2016) Northumberland: Creative Landscape: A Cultural Strategy for Northumberland 2016-2021.
- Northumberland County Council (2016) Northumberland Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2021.
- Northumberland County Council (2017) Northumberland Emergency Community Assistance Plan.
- Northumberland County Council (2018) Housing Distribution Technical Paper.
- Northumberland County Council (2018) Housing Economic Growth Options Report.
- Northumberland County Council (2018) Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Part 1).
- Northumberland County Council (2018) Second and Holiday Homes Technical Paper.
- Northumberland County Council (2018) Net Additional Homes Provided in Northumberland (003-00) 2017-2018, with Affordable Housing Delivery and Previously Developed Land Analysis.
- Northumberland County Council (2018) The Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019-24.
- Northumberland Joint Municipal Waste Strategy (2003).
- Northumberland National Park Authority (2009) Northumberland National Park Local Development Framework – Core Strategy & Development Policies.
- Northumberland National Park Authority (2016) Northumberland National Park Management Plan 2016 – 2021 – Distinctive Places, Open Spaces.
- Northumberland National Park Authority (2018) Local Plan 2017-2037 Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (Preferred Options Draft Plan)
- North Pennines AONB Partnership (2014) North Pennines AONB Management Plan 2014-2019.
- Northumberland Strategic Partnership (2007) The Heat is on – Strategic Framework for Climate Change Planning.
- North Tyneside Council (2017) North Tyneside Local Plan.
- Scottish Borders Council (2016) Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan.
- Tynedale District Council (2000) Tynedale District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction, 2007).
- Tynedale District Council (2007) Tynedale Core Strategy.
- Wansbeck District Council (2007) Wansbeck District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of State's Direction, 2010).
- Wear Valley District Council (1997) Wear Valley District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of state's Direction, 2007).

2.3 Objectives and Policies Relevant to the Local Plan and SA

2.3.1

The review of plans and programmes presented in **Appendix C** (which is in a separate document which accompanies this report) has identified a number of objectives and policy messages relevant to the Local Plan and scope of the SA across the following topic areas:

- Community, Health, Wellbeing and Cohesion;
- Housing;
- Economy and Employment;
- Transport and Accessibility;
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure;

- Geology, Soils and Land Use;
- Water;
- Air Quality;
- Flood Risk and Change;
- Climate Change;
- Natural Resources and Waste;
- Built and Natural Heritage; and
- Landscape Character.

2.3.2 These messages are summarised in **Table 2.2** together with the key sources and implications for the SA Framework. Only the key sources are identified; however, it is acknowledged that many other plans and programmes could also be included.

Table 2.2 Key Messages Arising from the Review of Plans and Programmes

Key Objectives and Policy Messages	Key Source(s)	Implications for the SA Framework
Community, Health, Wellbeing and Cohesion		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address deprivation and reduce inequality through regeneration. • Ensure social equality and prosperity for all. • Provide high quality services, community facility and social infrastructure that are accessible to all. • Promote improvements to health and wellbeing. • Promote healthier lifestyles. • Minimise noise pollution. • Reduce crime including the fear of crime. • Reduce anti-social behaviour. • Ensure that there are appropriate facilities for the disabled and elderly. • Deliver safe and secure networks of green infrastructure and open space. 	NPPF, Northumberland Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2012, Achieving Health and Wellbeing in Northumberland 2014, Northumberland Emergency Community Assistance Plan (2017).	<p>The SA Framework should include objectives and/or guide questions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing deprivation and promoting equality and inclusion; • The provision of high quality community facilities and services; • The promotion of health and wellbeing; • The delivery of health facilities and services; • The provision of open space and recreational facilities; and • Reducing crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.
Housing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable housing growth and deliver a mix of high quality housing to meet local needs. • Increase the provision of affordable housing. • Make appropriate provision for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople. 	NPPF; Planning Policy for Traveller Sites; Northumberland Housing Strategy 2013-18, Private Sector Housing Strategy 2015, Northumberland Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2021, Northumberland Common Allocations Policy - Homefinder (2014), Northumberland Tenancy Strategy 2012, Northumberland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2015), Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (2008).	<p>The SA Framework should include objectives and/or guide questions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of high quality housing; • The provision of a mix of housing types to meet local needs; • Increase the provision of affordable housing; and • The provision of new plots for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling showpeople.

Key Objectives and Policy Messages	Key Source(s)	Implications for the SA Framework
Economy and Employment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that there is an adequate supply of employment land to meet local needs and to attract inward investment. Encourage economic diversification including growth in high value, high growth, and high knowledge economic sectors. Strengthen the visitor economy. Encourage rural diversification and support rural economic growth. Create local employment opportunities. Enhance skills in the workforce to reduce unemployment and deprivation. Improve educational attainment and ensure the appropriate supply of high quality educational facilities. Promote the vitality of town centres and support retail and leisure sectors. 	<p>NPPF, Northumberland Economic Strategy 2015-2020, Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (2008). More and Better Jobs – The North East Strategic Economic Plan 2017, Northumberland Economic Strategy 2015-2020, Northumberland Destination Management Plan 2015-2020, the various district and core strategies identified in Table 2.1</p>	<p>The SA Framework should include objectives and/or guide questions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The enhancement of education and skills; Delivery of employment land that supports economic diversification and the creation of high quality, local jobs; Support for rural diversification; The promotion of tourism and the visitor economy; and Enhancing town centres.
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance biodiversity, including designated sites, priority species, habitats and ecological networks. Identify opportunities for green infrastructure provision. 	<p>Natural Environment White Paper: The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature; Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services; UK post 2010 Biodiversity Framework; NPPF, Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan, the various district and core strategies identified in Table 2.1</p>	<p>The SA Framework should include a specific objective relating to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity including green infrastructure provision.</p>
Transport and Accessibility		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage sustainable transport and reduce the need to travel. Reduce traffic and congestion. Improve public transport provision. Encourage walking and cycling. Enhance accessibility to key community facilities, services and jobs for all. Ensure timely investment in transportation infrastructure to accommodate new development. Reduce road freight movements. Reduce the degree by which transport contributes towards climate change. 	<p>NPPF; Air Quality Plan for Nitrogen Dioxide 2017; Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance 2014, Blyth Valley Local Development Framework 2007, Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011-2026.</p>	<p>The SA Framework should include objectives and/or guide questions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the need to travel, particularly by car; The promotion of sustainable forms of transport; Encouraging walking and cycling; Maintaining and enhancing accessibility to key facilities, services and jobs; Reducing congestion and enhancing road safety; and Investment in transportation infrastructure to meet future needs.
Geology, Soils and Land Use		

Key Objectives and Policy Messages	Key Source(s)	Implications for the SA Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the use of previously developed (PDL) land. Promote the re-use of derelict land and buildings. Reduce land contamination. Protect soil quality and minimise the loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. Promote high quality design. Avoid damage to, and protect, geologically important sites. Encourage mixed use development. 	Safeguarding Our Soils: A Strategy for England; EU Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC) & Subsequent Amendments; Northumberland Minerals Local Plan, Written Statement and Proposals Map (amended 2007); Northumberland National Park Management Plan 2016-2021 – Distinctive Places and Open Spaces.	<p>The SA Framework should include objectives and/or guide questions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging the use of previously developed land and buildings; Reducing land contamination; Avoiding the loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land; Promoting high quality design including mixed use development; and Protecting and avoiding damage to geologically important sites.
Water		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance surface and groundwater quality. Improve water efficiency. Avoid development in areas of flood risk. Reduce the risk of flooding arising from new development. Ensure timely investment in water management infrastructure to accommodate new development. Promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. 	Water Framework Directive; Drinking Water Directive; Floods Directive; Flood and Water Management Act 2010; Water for Life, White Paper; NPPF; Northumbrian River Basin District River Basin Management Plan; Northumbrian Water Resources Management Plan 2015-2020.	The SA Framework should include specific objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of water quality and quantity and minimising flood risk.
Air Quality		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that air quality is maintained or enhanced and that emissions of air pollutants are kept to a minimum. 	Air Quality Directive; Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; NPPF.	The SA Framework should include a specific objective and/or guide question relating to air quality.
Flood Risk and Coastal Change		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid development in areas of flood risk. Reduce the risk of flooding arising from new development. Ensure timely investment in water management infrastructure to accommodate new development. Promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. Continue to monitor coastal erosion and ways to mitigate it and protect the coast. 	NPPF, National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England 2011, Northumberland Region River Basin and Flood Management Plan 2015, Northumberland Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Final Report 2011, Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2010, Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan 2014-2019, Berwickshire & North Northumberland Coast European Marine Site Management Scheme 2014, Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2 (2009).	The SA Framework should include a specific objective and/or guide questions relating to flooding and coastal erosion.
Climate Change		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise the effects of climate change. Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that may cause climate change. 	Climate Change Act 2008; Carbon Plan: Delivering our Low Carbon Future; UK Renewable Energy Strategy; and NPPF.	The SA Framework should include a specific objective relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Key Objectives and Policy Messages	Key Source(s)	Implications for the SA Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the provision of renewable energy. Move towards a low carbon economy. 		
Natural Resources and Waste		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle, recover). Ensure the adequate provision of local waste management facilities. Promote the efficient and sustainable use of mineral resources. Promote the use of local resources. Avoid the sterilisation of mineral reserves. Promote the use of substitute or secondary and recycled materials and minerals waste. Ensure the timely provision of infrastructure to support new development. Support the delivery of high quality communications infrastructure. 	Waste Framework Directive; Landfill Directive; Waste Management Plan for England; NPPF; National Planning Policy for Waste; The Heat is on – Northumberland Strategic Partnership (2007).	<p>The SA Framework should include objectives and/or guide questions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of the waste hierarchy; The sustainable use of minerals; Investment in infrastructure to meet future needs.
Built and Cultural Heritage		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve and enhance cultural heritage assets and their settings. Support the significance of heritage assets and their settings and the contribution the setting makes to their significance. Maintain and enhance access to cultural heritage assets. Respect, maintain and strengthen local character and distinctiveness. Improve the quality of the built environment. 	NPPF; North Pennines AONB and European Geopark Geodiversity Action Plan 2010-2015. Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan 2014-2019, Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site Management Plan 2015-2019, the various district Local Plans and Core Strategies identified in Table 2.1	The SA Framework should include a specific objective relating to the conservation and enhancement of the County's cultural heritage.
Landscape		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of natural landscapes and townscapes. Promote access to the countryside. Promote high quality design that respects and enhances local character. Avoid inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Ensure that the Green Belt endures beyond the plan period. 	NPPF; Alnwick District Local Plan (1997), Blyth Valley Core Strategy (2007), Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003), Tynedale District Local Plan (2000), Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007), Northumberland National Park Management Plan 2016-2021, North Pennines AONB Management Plan 2014-2019, Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan 2014-2019, Northumberland Creative Landscape A Cultural Strategy for Northumberland 2016-2021.	The SA Framework should include a specific objective relating to the protection and enhancement of landscape and townscapes.

3. Baseline Analysis

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 An essential part of the SA scoping process is the identification of the current baseline conditions and their likely evolution. It is only with a knowledge of existing conditions, and a consideration of their likely evolution, can the effects of the Local Plan be identified and appraised and its subsequent success or otherwise be monitored. The SEA Directive also requires that the evolution of the baseline conditions of the plan area (that would take place without the plan or programme) is identified, described and taken into account. This is also useful in determining the key issues for each topic that should be taken forward in the SA, through the SA objectives and guide questions.
- 3.1.2 This section of the SA Report identifies and characterises current socio-economic and environmental baseline conditions for Northumberland, along with how these are likely to change in the future. The analysis is presented for the following topic areas:
- Community, Health Wellbeing and Cohesion;
 - Housing;
 - Economy and Employment;
 - Transport and Accessibility;
 - Biodiversity and green infrastructure;
 - Geology, Soils and Land Use;
 - Water;
 - Air Quality;
 - Flood Risk and Coastal Change;
 - Climate Change;
 - Natural Resources and Waste;
 - Built and Cultural Heritage; and
 - Landscape Character.
- 3.1.3 Additionally, this section also presents a high level overview of Northumberland.
- 3.1.4 To inform the analysis, data has been drawn from a variety of sources, including: the Office of National Statistics; Nomis; the emerging Local Plan evidence base, including the Northumberland Demographic Analysis and Forecasts 2017²⁴; Environment Agency; Historic England; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
- 3.1.5 The key sustainability issues arising from the review of baseline conditions are summarised at the end of each topic.

²⁴ Northumberland Demographic Analysis and Forecasts 2017 (Edge Analytics) available online at:

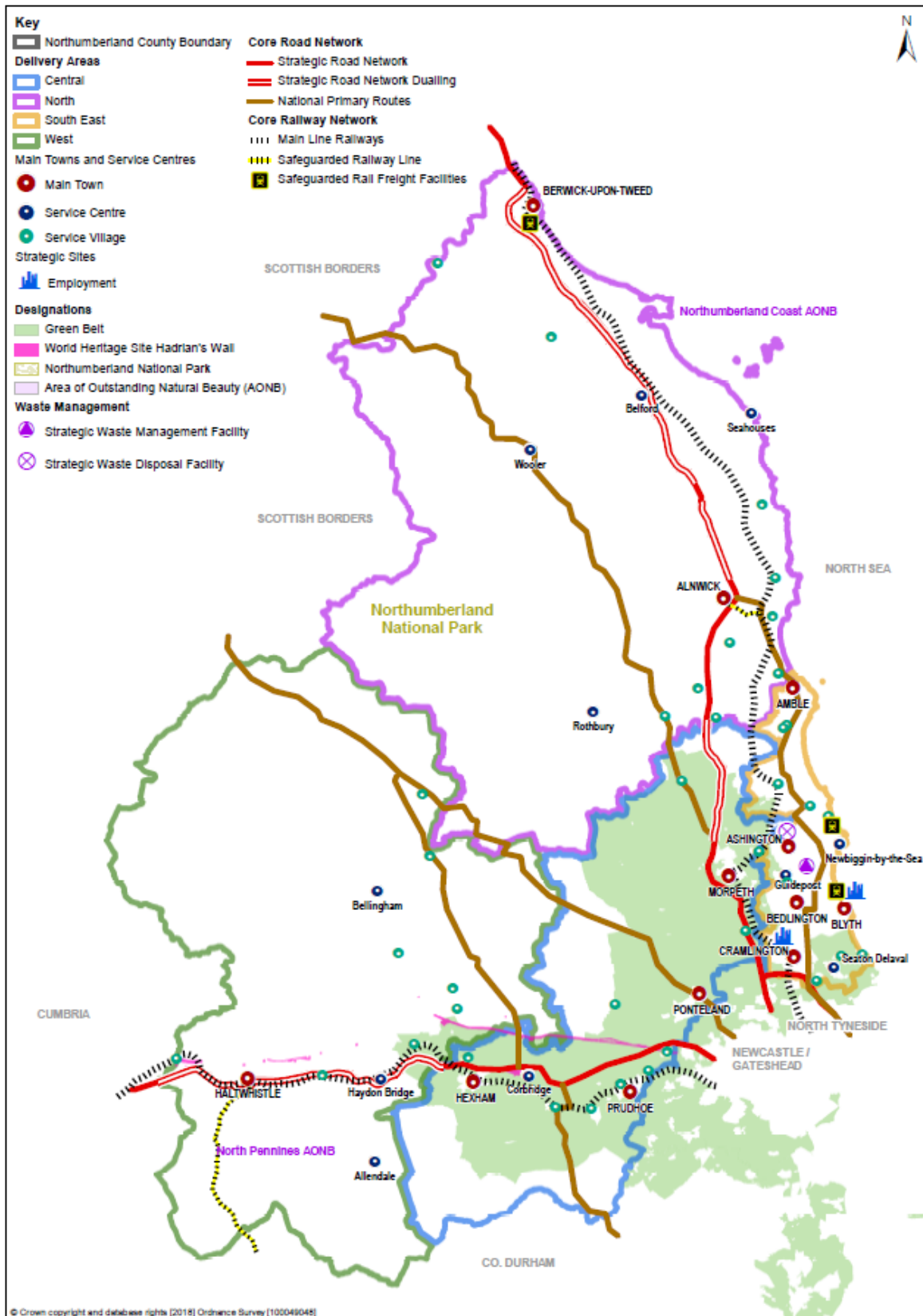
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Demographic%20Studies/Demographic-Analysis-and-Forecasts-March-2017.pdf>

3.2 Northumberland County: An Overview

- 3.2.1 Northumberland is the northern most English County and is the sixth largest County in England with a land area of 5,013 sq. km. However it has a population of approximately 315,263 making it one of the least densely populated Counties (63 people per sq. km). There is an uneven distribution of population with over half living in the urbanised south east, (within the towns of Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington), which covers only 5% of the County's area. These towns act as main employment centres as well as providing a significant range of services for south east Northumberland and beyond. Beyond the south east, the County's main settlements are located along the Tyne Valley, and the lowland coastal strip. Morpeth, Hexham, Prudhoe, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick are the main towns, all of which have large rural hinterlands. The predominantly rural areas of the County are interspersed with smaller towns, some with their own hinterlands, as well as numerous villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads.
- 3.2.2 Areas in the south of the County have a strong relationship with the Tyne and Wear conurbation. To a lesser extent areas in the north and west of the County have relationships with the Scottish Borders, Edinburgh and the Lothians and Carlisle.
- 3.2.3 The Green Belt extends along the south of the County from the coast at Blyth to the west of Hexham. There are numerous designated areas and sites including two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, numerous historic assets, internationally and nationally important ecological sites and the Northumberland Dark Sky Park.
- 3.2.4 The Northumberland economy has grown in recent years and there are healthy levels of economic activity and employment (although this varies significantly across the County), but GVA²⁵ remains lower than both the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) area and the national rate of growth. Small businesses dominate the economy, with 89% of enterprises employing fewer than 10 people in 2014. Although the number of new business ventures established is proportionately lower than elsewhere in the UK, new business start-ups are generally resilient, with failure rates below the regional and national average. However, the number of large firms is comparatively low, with only 0.2% of the total number of businesses employing over 250 people, compared to an average of 0.6% across the NELEP area. Northumberland's economy is linked to Tyneside and there is a net outflow from Northumberland to adjoining areas for employment. Information from the 2011 Census showed that over 45,000 residents travel to adjoining areas for employment, the majority to Tyneside; over 22,000 people commute into the County for employment, the majority from Tyneside.
- 3.2.5 The 2014 based sub-national population projections (released in 2016) show that, whilst Northumberland's population is projected to grow between 2014 and 2039, the rate of population growth is lower than that estimated for the North East and England (1.8% compared to 6.8% and 16.5%). Northumberland's population is ageing. It has an older age profile than the North East and England - 23% of the population in the 65+ age range, compared to 19% and 18% respectively. Projections show that the over 65 age group is projected to significantly increase whilst the core working age population is projected to decrease.

²⁵ Gross Value Added is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.

Figure 3.1 Overview of Northumberland County



3.3 Community, Health, Wellbeing and Cohesion

Population

- 3.3.1 Northumberland is the sixth largest county in England with a land area of 5,013 sq. km. In 2016, it had a total population of 316,000²⁶ making it one of the least densely populated counties (63 people per sq. km). There is an uneven distribution of population with over half living in the urbanised south east which covers only 5% of the county's area. (within the towns of Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington). There is a very low population density in the rural north and west, which creates particular challenges for the delivery of services.
- 3.3.2 As at 30th of June 2017 the population of Northumberland was 319,030, an increase of 1,586 (0.5%) since mid-2017. In 2017, the average population density for England was 427 people per sq km, but for Northumberland this average figure was 64²⁷ people per sq km.
- 3.3.3 Between mid-2002 and mid-2011. Northumberland had an overall rising population with 9 out of the 9 years seeing a population increase. This changed in 2012 and 2013 however, with the figure decreasing slightly²⁸ and while the population of Northumberland increased between mid-2013 and mid-2014, it decreased again between mid-2014 and mid-2015.
- 3.3.4 In mid-2015 Northumberland, 60.4% of the population was aged 16 to 64 compared with 63.3% in the North East region and also 63.3% in England. Northumberland had a bigger proportion of persons aged 65 and over in the population than the North East region and a smaller proportion of persons aged 0 to 15 than the region.
- 3.3.5 Based on ONS population projections for mid-2014 to mid-2039²⁹, there will be an estimated 1.8% increase in the total population in Northumberland to reach 320,000. ONS 2014 population projections estimate that from 2014 to 2039 the population for England will increase by 16.5%.
- 3.3.6 The rate of population change in Northumberland is relatively low; however, it is not estimated to be evenly spread across all age groups. **Figure 3.2** below shows that between 2014 and 2039 there will be an estimated decrease in population in all age groups under 65 years old. In contrast, there will be an estimated increase in age group groups aged 70 years old and over³⁰. This has implications on a series of factors that affect the economy and social wellbeing of the County. The growth in the ageing population including significant growth in those aged 80 years old and over, will place increased demand on health and social support services in the future.

²⁶ ONS (2018) *Labour Market Profile – Northumberland*

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157061/report.aspx?town=northumberland>

²⁷ Figures from <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Northumberland-Knowledge-and-JSNA/Our-People/People.aspx> [Accessed October 2018].

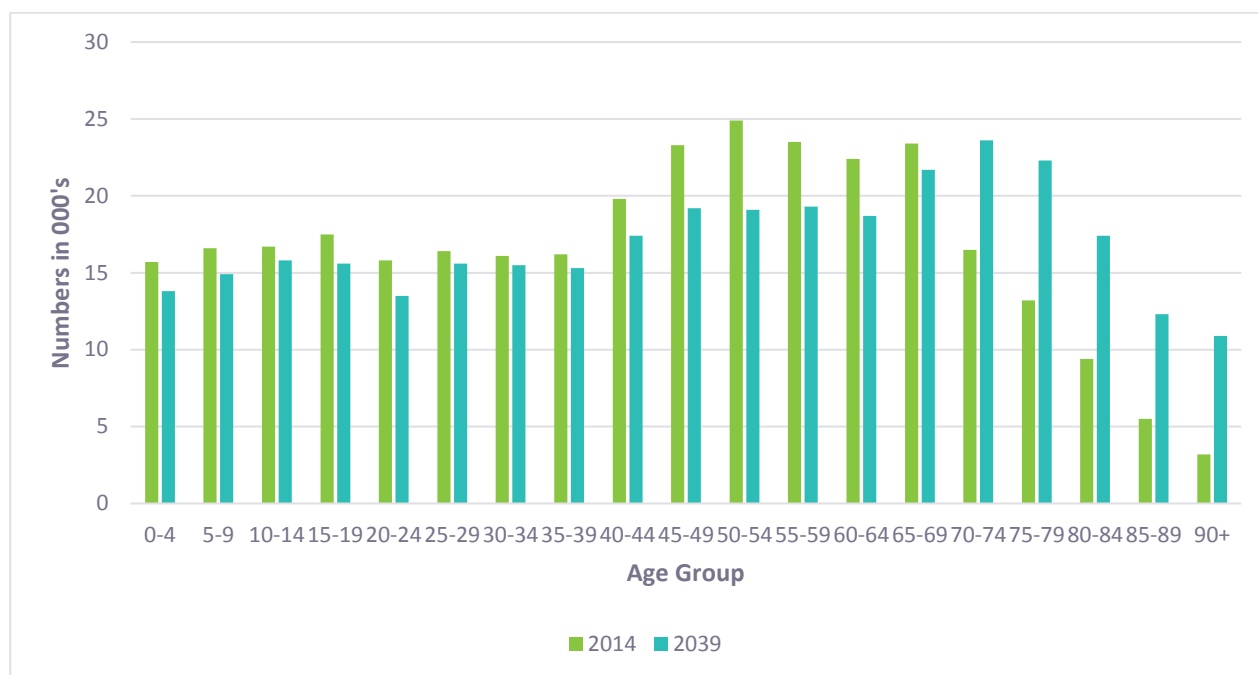
²⁸ Relevant Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2015) Local Profile [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesandscotlandandnorthernireland>

²⁹ ONS (2016) Subnational Population Projections for Local Authorities in England: Table 2

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

³⁰ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/snpp/sub-national-population-projections/2012-based-projections/rft-population-las.xls>

Figure 3.2 Northumberland Total Population Estimates 2014 and 2039



Deprivation (Including Fuel Poverty)

- 3.3.7 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD 2015) produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) highlights the variation across the County in terms of the incidence of deprivation and social disadvantage. The IMD brings together 38 different indicators covering seven specific aspects or domains of deprivation including income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime.
- 3.3.8 Northumberland has an average rank of 120 of the 326³¹ local authorities in England. In comparison with other local authorities in the North East, Northumberland has the second lowest proportion of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% and the third highest proportion in the 10% least deprived. Northumberland has 14 LSOAs in the most deprived 10% (two less than in 2010). **Table 3.1** identifies the most deprived LSOAs in Northumberland whilst **Table 3.2** identifies the least deprived.

Table 3.1 Northumberland's Most Deprived Lower Super Output Areas 2015

LSOA	Name	Electoral Division LSOA falls within	Score
E01027416	Northumberland 022C	Croft	64.07
E01027533	Northumberland 013A	College	57.75
E01027415	Northumberland 023B	Croft	56.41
E01027426	Northumberland 025B	Newsham	56.04

³¹ Northumberland Facts and Figures (2017). Available online at:
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Northumberland-Knowledge/NK%20place/Other%20area%20profiles/NorthumberlandFactsFigsFeb17.pdf>

LSOA	Name	Electoral Division LSOA falls within	Score
E01027545	Northumberland 010D	Ashington Central/College/Hirst	54.70
E01027540	Northumberland 013B	Hirst	53.74
E01027542	Northumberland 009B	Newbiggin Central and East	53.14
E01027412	Northumberland 029D	Cramlington West	52.24
E01027527	Northumberland 012D	Ashington Central	51.42
E01027539	Northumberland 010C	Hirst	51.40
E01027392	Northumberland 022A	Cowpen/Kitty Brewster	51.00
E01027424	Northumberland 022D	Kitty Brewster	50.12
E01027518	Northumberland 020C	Bedlington Central	47.33
E01027451	Northumberland 008E	Lynemouth	49.04

Source: English Indices of Deprivation 2015: Northumberland Knowledge, Research Report, November 2015

3.3.9 **Table 3.1** shows that while the most deprived LSOAs are concentrated in the South East of the County, not all LSOAs in the area are amongst the least deprived. However, the area contains several LSOAs that fall into the 11% to 20% and 21% to 30% most deprived.

3.3.10 The most deprived LSOA in Northumberland is E01027416, ranked 605th most deprived in England (falling within the most deprived 2%); it is located in the Croft electoral division in Blyth. The least deprived LSOA is E01027513 which is ranked 32,356 of 32,482 (within the 6% least deprived) as shown in **Table 3.2** below. The LSOA, Bywell, is located in the Wylam area of Northumberland.

Table 3.2 Northumberland's Least Deprived Lower Super Output Areas 2015

LSOA	Name	Electoral Division LSOA falls within	Score
E01027513	Northumberland 036D	Bywell	2.59
E01027456	Northumberland 018B	Morpeth North	2.80
E01027403	Northumberland 027D	Cramlington North	3.00
E01027455	Northumberland 018A	Morpeth Kirkehill	3.21
E01027401	Northumberland 027B	Cramlington North	3.33
E01027492	Northumberland 035E	Hexham West	3.51
E01027402	Northumberland 027C	Cramlington North	3.60
E01027469	Northumberland 034C	Ponteland South with Heddon	3.76
E01027400	Northumberland 027A	Cramlington North	4.10
E01027468	Northumberland 034B	Ponteland South with Heddon	4.59
E01027520	Northumberland 021C	Bedlington West	4.59
E01027507	Northumberland 039E	Stocksfield and Broomhaugh	4.83

LSOA	Name	Electoral Division LSOA falls within	Score
E01027460	Northumberland 018D	Morpeth Stobhill	5.13
E01027357	Northumberland 004B	Alnwick	5.16
E01027369	Northumberland 007C	Rothbury	5.17
E01027458	Northumberland 018C	Morpeth Kirkehill	5.37
E01027538	Northumberland 014C	Haydon	5.45
E01027509	Northumberland 039F	Stocksfield and Broomhaugh	5.50
E01027464	Northumberland 033A	Ponteland East	5.56
E01027494	Northumberland 035G	Cramlington East/Cramlington South East	5.57
E01027471	Northumberland 034D	Ponteland West	5.61

Source: English Indices of Deprivation 2015: Northumberland Knowledge, Research Report, November 2015

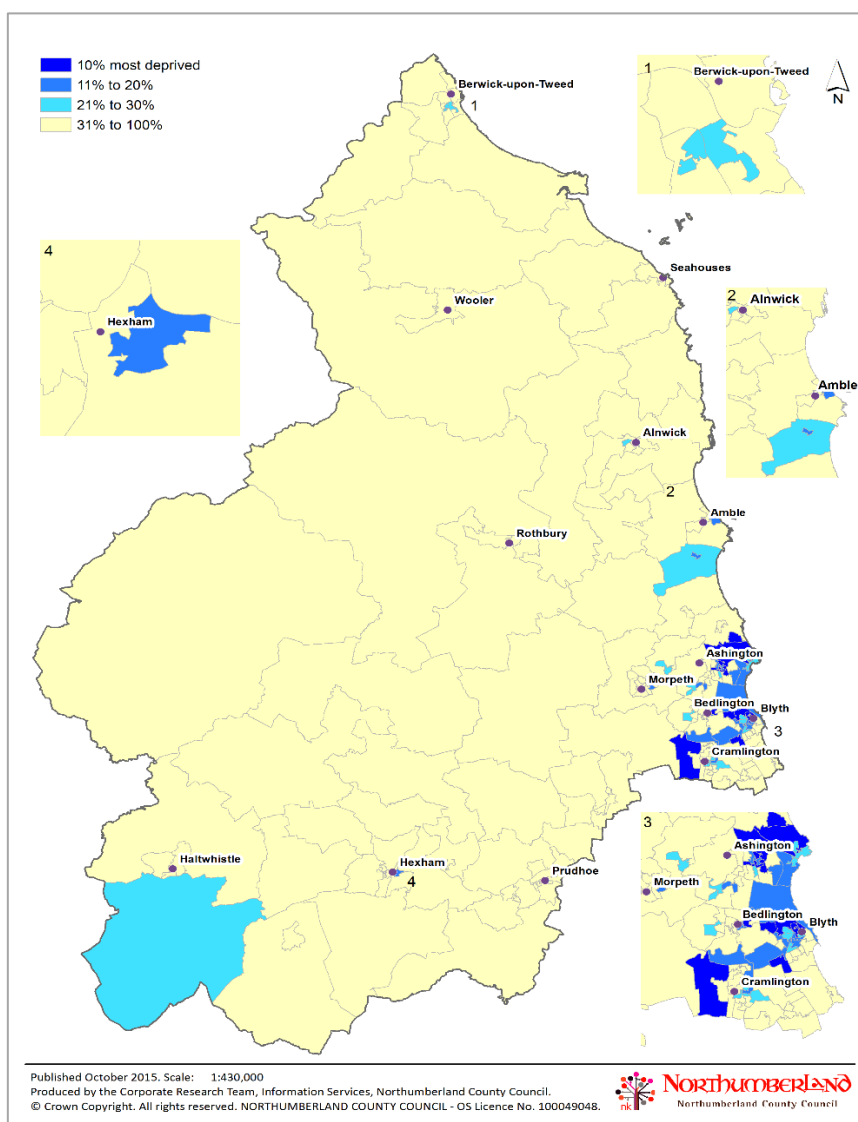
- 3.3.11 The northern and western areas of Northumberland have low population densities exacerbated by seasonal trends in holiday and second home occupation. Reduced accessibility to services and higher living costs are assessed in the Barriers to Housing & Services domain which measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and key local services. Due to the way in which the different domains are weighted to create the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation, problems caused by rural isolation are underestimated as a factor in deprivation. Northumberland has 32 LSOAs in the most deprived decile of the Barriers to Housing & Services domain, the majority of which fall within the rural areas of the County away from major settlements. However in a change from the ID 2010 there are now some LSOAs in the more urban south east of the county which are falling into the worst 10% indicating that for this domain higher levels of deprivation have become more widespread throughout the County.
- 3.3.12 Examining the IMD domains for income; employment; health deprivation and disability; education, skills and training and crime, these are most severe in South East Northumberland, whereas within the domains of barriers to housing and services and living environment deprivation is more apparent in the rural areas of Northumberland³².
- 3.3.13 The Government recently took the decision to change the definition for fuel poverty, which states that a household will be defined as “fuel poor” if occupants have a total income that is “below the poverty line taking into account energy costs” and its “energy costs are higher than typical”. This new definition is called the low income high costs indicator (LICH).
- 3.3.14 Using the new LICH indicator, the number of households in Northumberland calculated as being in fuel poverty in 2013 is 15,942 or 11.4%³³. This is lower than the percentage of households calculated as being in fuel poverty in the North East (11.8%) but higher than the national figure (10.4%). It is important to consider that any increase in energy prices could lead to a higher proportion of people living in fuel poverty. However, in 2013, 41% of private housing in Northumberland was classed as ‘non-decent’ primarily due to being hard to keep warm due to their solid wall construction³⁴.
- 3.3.15 **Figure 3.3** below shows the distribution of the most deprived IMD in Northumberland.

³² Northumberland Knowledge (2015), Research Report - English Indices of Deprivation, November 2015.

³³ Annual Fuel Poverty Statistics Report 2017 (2015 Data).

³⁴ A Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2013-18. Available online at: https://www.yhne.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/northumberland_housing_strategy2013-2018.pdf

Figure 3.3 Map of the IMD 2015 Distribution of the Most Deprived Areas



Health

- 3.3.16 The 2018 health profile³⁵ for Northumberland (which compares the health of Northumberland with the rest of England) highlights that the health of people in Northumberland is varied compared with the England. About 17% (8,500) of children live in low income families and life expectancy for women is lower than the England average.
- 3.3.17 The 2017 health profile for Northumberland highlighted that there is a slight difference in life expectancy at birth for males in Northumberland (79.2 years) and in England (79.5 years). The life expectancy at birth for females in Northumberland (82.6 years) is similarly slightly less than for England (83.1 years). **Table 3.3** below shows the average life expectancy data for Northumberland compared to adjacent local authorities in the north east, the north east as a region and England as a whole from 2013 to 2015.

³⁵ Public Health England (2018) Northumberland Unitary Authority Public Health Profile 2018, July 2018

https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/area-search-results/E12000001?search_type=list-child-areas&place_name=North East

Table 3.3 Life Expectancy at Birth (2014-2016)³⁶

	Males	Females
Northumberland	79.2	82.6
Gateshead	77.7	81.4
Newcastle	77.8	81.5
North Tyneside	77.7	82.4
County Durham	78.1	81.2
North East	77.9	81.6
England	79.5	83.1

- 3.3.18 In 2001 the life expectancy in Northumberland for males was 75.9 years; therefore there has been a significant increase over the last 15 years. Similarly with females, a significant increase has been shown when compared to the 2001 life expectancy of 80.6 years.³⁷ Despite these improvements, both male and female life expectancy remains lower than the average for England.
- 3.3.19 Northumberland had an infant mortality rate of 3.2 deaths per 1,000 live births over the period 2013-15. This compares with the rate for England which has 3.9 deaths per 1,000 live births³⁸. Infant mortality rates in Northumberland have fluctuated since 2001, but have been declining steadily since 2009, and has been equal or lower than the mortality rates for England since 2001.³⁹
- 3.3.20 The Health Profile 2018⁴⁰ shows that the health of people in Northumberland is varied compared with the England averages. Deprivation is lower than average, but about 19% (9,800) children live in poverty. The life expectancy gap (the difference between the top and bottom of the inequality slope) for males is 9.4 years and females 6.2 years.
- 3.3.21 In the period of 2015/16 the number of children in Year 6 education 19.6%% (575) were classified as obese, which is better than the average for England (19.8%)⁴¹. The level of obesity in Northumberland's Year 6 population has increased since then, with 21.1% of the Year 6 population being considered obese in 2016/17, which is higher than the average for England (20%) but lower than the North East average (22.5%)⁴². The rate of alcohol specific hospital stays among those under 18 was 50.4 (rate per 100,000 population). This represents 30 stays per year. Levels of GCSE attainment, breastfeeding and smoking at time of delivery are worse than the England average.

³⁶ Public Health England (2018) Northumberland Unitary Authority Public Health Profile 2019, July 2018
[https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/area-search-results/E12000001?search_type=list-child-areas&place_name=North East](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/area-search-results/E12000001?search_type=list-child-areas&place_name=North%20East)

³⁷ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/4/gid/1938132696/pat/6/par/E12000001/ati/102/are/E06000057/iid/90366/age/1/sex/2>

³⁸ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/4/gid/1938132696/pat/6/par/E12000001/ati/102/are/E06000057/iid/92196/age/2/sex/4>

³⁹ <http://fingertipsreports.phe.org.uk/health-profiles/2017/e06000057.pdf>

⁴⁰ Public Health England (2018) Northumberland Unitary Authority Public Health Profile 2018, July 2018
[https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/area-search-results/E12000001?search_type=list-child-areas&place_name=North East](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/area-search-results/E12000001?search_type=list-child-areas&place_name=North%20East)

⁴¹ Northumberland Facts and Figures, February 2017. Available at:
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Northumberland-Knowledge/NK%20place/Other%20area%20profiles/NorthumberlandFactsFigsFeb17.pdf>

⁴² NHS Health Profiles Available at: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/0/gid/8000073/pat/6/par/E12000001/ati/102/are/E06000057>

- 3.3.22 Recent statistics from the 2018 health profile show that the total number of obese children aged 10-11 was 634 (21.1%). The rate of alcohol specific stays among those under 18 is 57, worse than the average for England and represents 34 stays per year. The health profile also highlights that levels of GCSE attainment, breastfeeding initiation and smoking at the time of delivery are worse than the England average.
- 3.3.23 The biggest cause of injuries and ill health in Northumberland was dementia for those aged 65 and over, followed by cancer and then hospital stays for self-harm.
- 3.3.24 Compared to England, Northumberland has significantly better levels of deprivation, children in poverty, statutory homelessness and violent crime. Northumberland had significantly lower rates of GCSE achievement and long-term unemployment, both compared to national rates and the average of its cluster group. In contrast to England, Northumberland has significantly poorer outcomes for smoking status at time of delivery, alcohol-specific hospital stays for under 18s, excess weight in adults, hospital stays for alcohol related harm, recorded diabetes, life expectancy for females (as identified above), smoking related deaths, levels of self-harming and people seriously injured or killed on roads.
- 3.3.25 Demands on healthcare in the County are likely to increase due to a growing population and an increasing elderly population. The types of services required may also alter in relation to the change in population profile as associated illnesses may differ.
- 3.3.26 The number of excess winter deaths⁴³ has been largely similar to the trends in the region and England as a whole since 2001; however, for the most recent period (2013 – 2016) the ratio has increased ahead of the regional and national comparisons (a total of 707 deaths giving a ratio of 21.6 compared to 17.4 and 17.9 in England).⁴⁴
- 3.3.27 Northumberland's Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁴⁵ (IDP) highlights that Northumberland has a relatively low average of patients to GP of one GP to 1,669 patients. This is significantly below the national average of one GP to 2,069 patients. Data collected for this delivery plan suggests that Northumberland is generally well served in terms of primary healthcare but there is variation across the county and some GP practices have patient to GP ratios above the national average.

Crime

- 3.3.28 In Northumberland, the overall crime rate went up slightly from March 2014 to March 2015. **Table 3.4** below shows the number of crime incidences and the percentage change from March 2013-14 to March 2014-2015. There were significant reductions in drug crime and violent robbery, however the number of violent crime incidents increased, particularly sexual offences, along with the number of crime incidents categorised as vehicle interference.⁴⁶

⁴³ Ratio of excess winter deaths (observed winter deaths minus expected deaths based on non-winter deaths) to average non-winter deaths (three years).

⁴⁴ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/4/gid/1938132696/pat/6/par/E12000001/ati/102/are/E06000057/iid/90641/age/1/sex/4>

⁴⁵ Available at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Infrastructure%20Studies/NCC-IDP-Part-1-July-2018-Low-Res.pdf>

Table 3.4 Crimes Recorded in Northumberland 2013/14 – 2014/15

Northumberland	2013/14	2014/15	% Change
Total Crime	10345	10938	6
Violent Crime	1848	2338	27
a) Violence against the person	1520	1894	25
b) Robbery	40	30	-25
c) Sexual offences	185	327	77
Vehicle Crime	916	977	7
a) Theft of motor vehicle	147	183	24
b) Theft from motor vehicle	739	688	-7
c) Vehicle interference	30	106	253
Burglary	1527	1481	-3
a) Burglary dwelling	428	468	9
b) Burglary other than dwelling	1099	1013	-8
Criminal Damage	2201	2425	10
Drug Crime	529	407	-23
Other Crime	3324	3310	0

3.3.29 From 2015 to 2016, 14,646 key notifiable offences occurred within Northumberland which was 34% higher than the previous year (10,896). It is also estimated that violent crime increased by 72% within this period.

3.3.30 It is difficult to predict future crime levels, but it is likely that the concentration of crime will continue to be most prevalent in the urban areas and town centres. Urbanised areas are likely to continue to have higher rates of crime as is the current trend.

Community Facilities and Services

3.3.31 The Main Towns of: Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe are the key hubs for community facilities and services such as education, healthcare, retail and transport. These towns provide a range of services for their own communities and a wider area of the County and include, as an example, Ashington which provides large scale facilities and services such as a hospital and Cramlington which also contains a specialist emergency care hospital and cinema alongside both towns providing other large scale facilities and services such as primary and secondary schools. The market towns of Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Morpeth and Hexham provide services for the rural hinterlands. This includes schools (first/middle/primary/secondary schools), shops and in Hexham's case, a hospital and a regionally and nationally significant auction mart.

3.3.32 The Service Centre Towns of Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Guide Post, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval and Wooler provide a range of shopping, education (first/middle/primary) and health care facilities to meet more local needs

which also serves the surrounding rural areas. Bellingham, Rothbury and Wooler act as gateways to the Northumberland National Park and provide local services for residents of the Park.

- 3.3.33 Northumberland's Infrastructure Delivery Plan notes that there are 33 public libraries in Northumberland and that this service is supplemented by a mobile library van covering the Central, West and North of the County. Additionally there is a home library service.

Open Space

- 3.3.34 Public open space within the County helps meet the recreational needs of local people. In the majority of cases, this space is well integrated with public rights of way or permissive routes. Country Parks provide a managed environment to make users feel secure and comfortable with clearly way marked paths in good condition, many of which provide "access for all". The majority of country parks have visitor facilities including cafes, toilets and information. The Country Parks include:

- Bedlington Country Park;
- Bolam Lake Country Park;
- Druridge Bay Country Park;
- Plessey Woods Country Park;
- Queen Elizabeth II Park, Ashington;
- Tyne Green at Hexham;
- Tyne Riverside Country Park; and
- Wansbeck Riverside.

- 3.3.35 A considerable quantity of Northumberland's parks and green spaces have been awarded Green Flag Awards by the environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy. Green Flag Awards are only rewarded to the best parks and green spaces in the UK and signal that they are excellent open spaces, are well maintained and have excellent facilities. The following green spaces and Country Parks were awarded green flags:

- Ridley Park;
- Hirst Park;
- Doctor Pit Park;
- Alexandra Park;
- Hexham Parks;
- Carlisle Park;
- Astley Park;
- Castle Vale and Coronation Parks;
- Plessey Woods Country Park; and
- Bolam Lake Country Park.

- 3.3.36 In addition to the Country Parks, Northumberland has a number of large houses with surrounding grounds that offer a countryside experience. These include:

- Belsay Hall: English Heritage;
- Wallington: National Trust; and
- Craggside: National Trust.

3.3.37 Other sites with public access include areas owned by the County Council and conservation groups including Northumberland Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust. There are also a number of woodlands within Northumberland, which are used for recreation purposes.

Sport and Recreation

3.3.38 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁴⁷ (IDP) highlights that the Council has a good provision of sport and recreation facilities, including in respect of built facilities such as leisure centres. Since 2014 Active Northumberland has managed the 17 leisure sites throughout Northumberland providing swimming and leisure facilities. A programme of investment has been undertaken to upgrade, renew and replenish existing services. Major new investments have included a new leisure and community centre in Ashington that opened at the start of 2016.

3.3.39 Provision varies across the County. North and South West Northumberland both have a surplus in contrast to the South East which has a deficit of over 70ha.

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

3.3.40 Northumberland has a higher proportion of residents aged 65 and over (23.1%) than North East England and England and is predicted to rise to 33.6% by 2039⁴⁸. Over the same period, the number of people aged 0-15 is projected to fall to 14.8%. It is therefore clear that Northumberland faces increased strain on its health facilities to cope with its ageing population and could potentially not have a sufficient number of younger people entering into the area to sustain these services. In the absence of policy intervention (of which the Local Plan is one important element), the overall population of Northumberland is projected to increase by 1.8% from 2014 to 2039 (compared to 6.8% for the region and 16.5% for England as whole). It will contain a growing proportion over 65 years of age and decreasing working age population. An ageing population and a reduced working age population have implications for the ability of Northumberland to provide a labour force for existing or potential employers who want to locate in the County in addition to placing strains on healthcare services. Without policy intervention, these factors have the potential to impact on the future sustainability and resilience of Northumberland's communities and could affect the achievement of the aims of the Council's Economic Strategy which is to ensure population growth, demographic balance and retention rather than loss of working age population.

3.3.41 Deprivation in Northumberland is continuing to increase. The south east of Northumberland is the most deprived and has the most common causes of deprivation with income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education, skills, training and crime all being an issue in this area. Northumberland is below the North East England average but higher than the national average with regard to fuel poverty. The poorer quality of Northumberland's private housing stock could push more people into fuel poverty alongside potential increases in energy prices.

3.3.42 Deprivation can be found in the rural populations of Northumberland. The remote nature of the rural communities often means they are considered to be deprived through a lack of housing and

⁴⁷ Available online at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Infrastructure%20Studies/NCC-IDP-Part-1-July-2018-Low-Res.pdf>

⁴⁸ Northumberland Facts and Figures (2017). Available online at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Northumberland-Knowledge/NK%20place/Other%20area%20profiles/NorthumberlandFactsFigsFeb17.pdf>

services. Northumberland County Council should therefore consider new housing options within or close to established rural communities and the creation of new services and facilities in this area⁴⁹. Without local policy relating to the quantum, type and location of new housing, the extent to which new development would meet such needs would be more uncertain as, to a large extent, the key decisions over where development is located would be left solely to the market.

- 3.3.43 Life expectancy for males, females and infants has been growing year on year in Northumberland. However, life expectancy across Northumberland could be affected by growing levels of obesity in children and adults, smoking and alcohol related issues and self-harm. Working in conjunction with the health sector, the Council could encourage a healthy lifestyle in its residents by pursuing policies in the Local Plan that include safeguarding and enhancing existing open space and recreational facilities. Local planning policy could also help to ensure the future provision of health facilities and services to meet local needs and that new development does not give rise to adverse impacts on human health.
- 3.3.44 Northumberland's Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁵⁰ highlights that there has been significant investments in healthcare provision in recent years in Northumberland and these have included:
- An adult autism unit in Morpeth, which opened in Autumn 2016;
 - A new NHS centre in Morpeth providing outpatient and diagnostic services, as well as primary care;
 - A new purpose-built community hospital was opened in Haltwhistle in June 2014. It delivers expert care, predominantly for the elderly, who require inpatient support following illness, injury or a spell in another hospital;
 - A specialist emergency care hospital at Cramlington. The hospital is the first of its kind in the UK to provide the level of specialist emergency care. It opened in June 2015; and
 - A new purpose built mental health hospital at St George's in Morpeth which opened in 2006.
- 3.3.45 The open spaces of Northumberland are, generally, in good condition with many being managed by national bodies such as Northumberland Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust. The majority of Northumberland's 501,301ha is rural countryside and provides excellent opportunities for residents to undertake physical activities. Continuing to protect such areas would have further benefits by maintaining and potentially increasing the attractiveness of Northumberland to tourists. Tourism is seen as a growth area for Northumberland and there are a number of strategies that aim to increase visitor numbers and the tourism offer. Maintaining and enhancing open spaces is likely to continue irrespective of the Local Plan. However, planning policy can safeguard existing open space and recreational facilities and address deficiencies.
- 3.3.46 Crime is steadily rising within Northumberland, with a considerable rise in violent crime from 2014 to 2015 (72% increase). There has also been a considerable increase in notable offences during the same time period (34%). It is therefore clear that both low level and high level crime is rising across Northumberland and the Council needs to consider how it can tackle crime. This is likely to be pursued regardless of the Local Plan. However, local planning policy could support crime reduction through, for example, the promotion of high quality design that seeks to create safe and secure communities.
- 3.3.47 Larger scale community facilities and services are predominantly located within the densely populated south east of Northumberland at Cramlington, Ashington and Blyth, with smaller more

⁴⁹ Northumberland Knowledge (2015), Research Report - English Indices of Deprivation, November 2015.

⁵⁰ Available online at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Infrastructure%20Studies/NCC-IDP-Part-1-July-2018-Low-Res.pdf>

rural Main Towns and Service Centre Towns providing services to their communities and a wide rural hinterland. As previously discussed, the rural population of Northumberland currently find it more difficult to access needed facilities and services.

- 3.3.48 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan highlights that there are likely to be increasing resource pressures for delivering and maintaining community facilities and services and that external funding sources will continue to be sought.
- 3.3.49 The absence of a Local Plan would not halt the delivery of community facilities and services. However, without local policy relating to (in particular) the quantum, type and location of new development and requirements with respect to community facilities and services provision, the extent to which new development meets the needs of Northumberland's communities and businesses would be more uncertain as (to a large extent) the key decisions over where development is located would be left solely to the market. This could undermine the potential for new development to help tackle deprivation and poor health and deliver community facilities and services, including in the rural areas.
- 3.3.50 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan highlights planned improvements to existing sports and recreation facilities in a number of locations throughout the district. However, without the local plan further opportunities for improvements to sports and recreation facilities (through for example developer contributions) may be lost.

Key Sustainability Issues

- The need to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of Northumberland's population;
- The need to promote a healthy lifestyle and increase physical activity to address obesity levels in adults and children;
- The need to address health inequalities between the rural and urban populations of Northumberland;
- The need to tackle deprivation, particularly in those areas that are most deprived;
- The need to protect, conserve and enhance the open spaces of Northumberland and create the provision for new open spaces;
- The need to address areas of deficit with sports and recreation facilities;
- The need to support high quality design that creates safe and secure communities;
- The need to safeguard existing health care facilities and services and ensure the timely delivery of new facilities and services to meet needs arising from new development and an ageing population;
- The need to maintain and enhance the vitality of the County's town centres and larger villages;
- The need to address relative isolation/remoteness of some communities; and
- The need to reflect the aims and objectives of Achieving Health and Wellbeing in Northumberland 2014.

3.4 Housing

- 3.4.1 The total number of dwellings recorded in the 2011 Census is 138,534, broken down by type as follows:

Table 3.5 Housing Types in Northumberland

	Count	%
All Households	138,534	100%
Detached	35,120	25.4%
Semi-Detached	50,127	36.2%
Terraced (Including End-Terrace)	38,345	27.7%
Purpose-Built Block of Flats or Tenement	11,602	8.4%
Part of a Converted or Shared House (Including Bed-Sits)	2,142	1.5%
In a Commercial Building	932	0.7%
Caravan or Other Mobile or Temporary Structure	232	0.2%
Shared Dwelling	34	0.02%

Source: 2011 Census

- 3.4.2 Net additional dwelling completions in 2016/2017 were 1,531 units, an increase from 991 dwellings in 2015/16. Roughly half of the new homes in Northumberland (47%) in 2016/17 were developed on previously developed land (PDL). This proportion equates to 715 units⁵¹. A net total of 417 affordable units were delivered in 2016/2017, which represents 27% of completions.
- 3.4.3 The Councils net additional homes report⁵² for 2017/18 highlights that the number of net additional dwellings completed in 2017/18 was 1,376 which is a decrease from the 2016/17 figure. The majority of these were new build developments on greenfield land – 864 which equates to 62.7% of completions, with 555 (gross completions) on PDL which equates to 39% of the total. Of the 1,376 net additional dwellings delivered in 2017/18, 187 were affordable homes, equating to 14%, which is lower than the figure of 27% in 2016/17. Affordable housing delivery has averaged at about 22% of all net housing completions over the past 7 years and has increased slightly to 23%⁵³ over the last five years.
- 3.4.4 In November 2017, the Council published an updated position statement to clarify the general approach to be taken to planning applications following the withdrawal of the Core Strategy, with particular regard to housing development⁵⁴. This position statement was accompanied by an updated Five-Year Housing Land Supply assessment report⁵⁵ which confirmed the approach that the Council took for establishing an Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing for the purposes of calculating the Council's five year housing land supply position while an updated evidence base for the new Local Plan is prepared. An OAN of 18,880 dwellings over the period 2011-31 was identified, equating to 944 dwellings per annum.

⁵¹ Northumberland County Council Net Additional Homes Provided 2016/17.

⁵² Available at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Housing%20Studies/8.%20Net%20additional%20homes/Net-Additional-Homes-Provided-2017-18.pdf>

⁵³ Figures from the Council's latest housing delivery paper available at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Housing%20Studies/8.%20Net%20additional%20homes/Net-Additional-Homes-Provided-2017-18.pdf>

⁵⁴ Position Statement Following Withdrawal of the Core Strategy, NCC, November 2017.

⁵⁵ Northumberland Five-Year Supply of Deliverable Sites 2017/18 to 2021/22, NCC, November 2017.

- 3.4.5 The Northumberland Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (October 2015) included evidence of affordable housing need in Northumberland. The 2017 position statement considered that its calculation of affordable housing need remained valid. An update SHMA (June 2018) was nevertheless prepared to inform the Publication Draft Local Plan. It identified an annual net shortfall in affordable housing across Northumberland of 151 dwellings per annum over the period 2017/18 to 2021/22. The Local Plan has a variable affordable housing rate for different areas of Northumberland to meet the overall countywide need. The approach has been informed by the viability assessment and applies an affordable housing rate based on value areas, ranging from 10% in lower value areas up to 30% in the highest value areas, with the tenure split also being variable according to the value area.

Table 3.6 Tenure in Northumberland 2011

	Northumberland Number	Percentage	North East Number	Percentage	England Number	Percentage
Owned Outright	46,086	33.3	323,084	28.6	6,745,584	30.6
Owned with a mortgage of loan	45,121	32.6	375,511	33.2	7,229,440	32.8
Part owned and part rented	510	0.4	4,098	0.4	173,760	0.8
Rented from Council (Local Authority)	14,820	10.7	167,593	14.8	2,079,778	9.4
Other social rented	11,021	8.0	91,913	8.1	1,823,772	8.3
Rented from Private landlord or letting agency	16,225	11.7	139,624	12.4	3,401,675	15.4
Other private rented	2,192	1.6	14,802	1.3	314,249	1.4
Living rent free	2,559	1.8	13,310	1.2	295,110	1.3

ONS (2011) *Census 2011*.

- 3.4.6 Northumberland has a higher level of homes that are owned outright (33.3%) when compared to the North East (28.6%) and England as a whole (30.6%) as shown in **Table 3.6** above.
- 3.4.7 The average house price in Northumberland was £158,000 in 2017, which was less than the average for England (£230,000) but more than the average for the North East (£135,000)⁵⁶. The average house prices in Northumberland rose by close to 5% through 2017, bringing the average house price to just under £158,000 by November 2017⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ ONS House price to residence-based earnings ratio dataset, April 2018. Available online at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales1997to2017>.
ONS House price to residence-based earnings ratio dataset, April 2018. Available online at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales1997to2017>.

- 3.4.8 Northumberland has a relatively good level of affordable houses being built with 417 completions in 2016/2017, much of which was within the South East of the County. Affordability in Northumberland is a considerable issue as it is across England. The overall house price to earnings ratio for Northumberland is 6.38:1 and is 5.55:1 when looking at lower house prices to lower incomes⁵⁸. This is further exacerbated by rural housing often suffering from price inflation due to their potential as secondary or holiday homes and making it less likely for Northumberland's residents to be able to afford them.
- 3.4.9 The private housing stock of Northumberland is of poorer quality. This can be seen through 41% of the private housing stock in Northumberland being considered to be 'non decent', whilst 0% of the Council's housing stock was classified as this⁵⁹. Northumberland therefore has the difficult task in needing to improve the quality of the existing housing stock whilst also continuing to encourage the building of new homes.
- 3.4.10 Second homes ownership is a significant issue in certain parts of the County. Figures from the Council's second and holiday homes technical paper⁶⁰ show that there is a particular issue along the North Northumberland coast. For example in Beadnell there are 298 second homes (51.3% of second homes), 54 on Holy Island (39.4% of second homes), 122 in Bamburgh (35.7% of second homes) and 145 in Embleton (30.3% of second homes). These figures are based on the second homes⁶¹ identified in the 2016 Council tax record.
- 3.4.11 The Council's second and holiday homes technical paper also identifies that the % of household spaces (Census 2011) identified as second homes or holiday lets is as high as 67.5% in Beadnell Parish, 61.2% in Newton by the Sea Parish, 54% in Bamburgh Parish and 50.4% in Easington Parish. This has impacts in relation to house prices and affordability.
- 3.4.12 Finally, Northumberland has a growing issue of an ageing population which is discussed above in **Section 3.3**. Northumberland Council needs to consider what type of new housing would best serve the County and ensure there is housing for young and old people alike. Providing new housing for older people could have the potential benefit of freeing up homes better suited to families with children still living at home and help to ease the need for housing amongst these demographics⁶².

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

- 3.4.13 The absence of a Local Plan would not halt the delivery of housing. However, without local policy relating to the quantum, type and location of new development, the extent to which new development meets the needs of the County would be more uncertain as, to a large extent, the key decisions over where development is located would be left solely to the market. This could result in housing pressures in inappropriate areas as well as undermining the potential for new development to help address shortfalls in affordable housing, tackle deprivation, deliver community facilities and protect the countryside.

⁵⁸ ONS House price to residence-based earnings ratio dataset, April 2018. Available online at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales1997to2017>.

⁵⁹ A Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2013-18. Available online at: https://www.yhne.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/northumberland_housing_strategy2013-2018.pdf

⁶⁰ Available at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Housing%20Studies/Technical%20Papers%20for%20Housing/NCC-Second-and-Holiday-Homes-Technical-Paper.pdf>

⁶¹ If a holiday home is available to let to other people for less than 140 days per year the Council tax is payable

⁶² A Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2013-18. Available online at: https://www.yhne.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/northumberland_housing_strategy2013-2018.pdf

Key Sustainability Issues

- The need to create sustainable places where people want to live and relax;
- The need to enable housing growth, meeting objectively assessed housing needs and planning for a mix of accommodation to suit all household types, especially housing for the older residents of Northumberland;
- The need to improve the quality of Northumberland's existing and future housing stock;
- The need to ensure a flexible supply of land for residential development, especially in the rural parts of Northumberland;
- The need to increase the level of affordable housing being built;
- The need to reflect the aims and objectives of the Northumberland Housing Strategy 2013-2018 and Northumberland Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2021; and
- The need to address impacts on housing availability and affordability associated with second homes ownership.

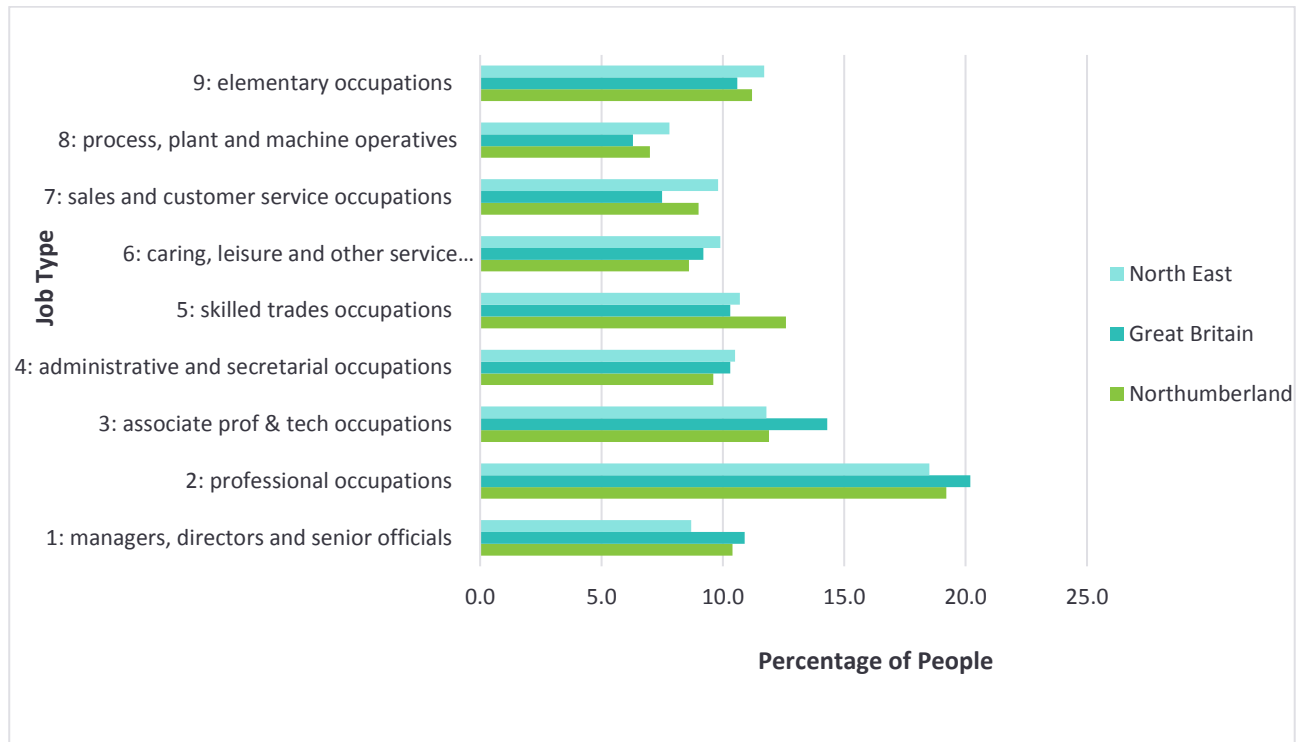
3.5 Economy and Employment

Employment

- 3.5.1 For many years, the economy of Northumberland has experienced fundamental economic restructuring. Jobs have been lost in the traditional industries, particularly deep coal mining and agriculture. Whilst job losses have been partially offset by the creation of new jobs in manufacturing and the service sector, unemployment rates in some of areas of the North East are significantly higher than the national average. This includes towns, such as Blyth within Northumberland, which has areas of high multiple deprivation.
- 3.5.2 Between October 2016 and September 2017, 72.5% of economically active people were in employment. This compares better to the North East as a whole (70.4%) but not when compared to Great Britain (74.5%). Similarly, unemployment was lower in Northumberland (5.3%) than the North East as a whole (6.5%) but was higher than Great Britain's as a whole (4.5%)⁶³.
- 3.5.3 The number of potentially economically active people between October 2014 and September 2015 was 152,300. However, this decreased by 2,500 to 149,800 potentially economically active people by October 2016 and then reduced by a further 1,000 to 148,800 potentially economically active people in September 2017.
- 3.5.4 The types of occupation in Northumberland are shown in **Figure 3.4** below. The job types are divided up into Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) groups. Northumberland has a greater number of higher classification jobs, such as managers, directors and senior officials than the North East. It also has a larger percentage of skilled trades than both the North East and Britain.

⁶³ ONS annual population survey (2018) via Nomis.

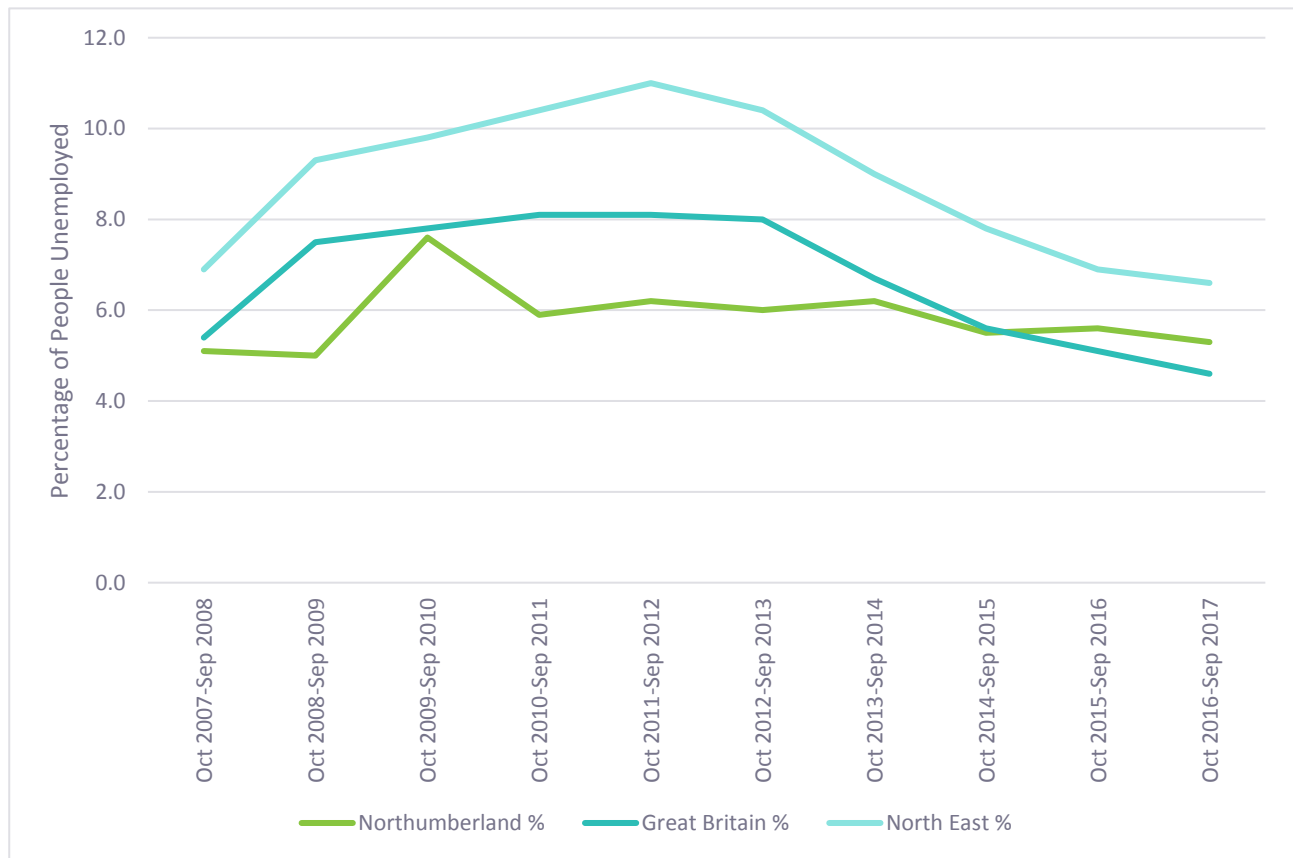
Figure 3.4 Percentage of People in Employment By Type in September 2017



Source: ONS (2018) via Nomis

3.5.5 As illustrated in **Figure 3.5** below, unemployment in Northumberland has continued to decline at a fairly steady rate, although this has been slower than the rate of decline in the North East and Great Britain.

Figure 3.5 Unemployment Levels 2007-17



Source: ONS (2018) via Nomis

3.5.6 **Table 3.7** below shows the earnings by residence. The average weekly pay for Northumberland is above that of the North East but below that of Great Britain as a whole.

Table 3.7 Gross Weekly Pay (2017)

Gross Weekly Pay	Northumberland (pounds)	North East (pounds)	Great Britain (pounds)
Full-time workers	521.7	504.1	552.7
Male full-time workers	569.2	543.2	594.2
Female full-time workers	468.3	452.3	494.4

Source: ONS (2018) via Nomis

Employment Within the County

3.5.7 In terms of employment, service sectors and in particular public services dominate:

- Service activities account for 80% of the County's jobs;
- Public Services is the largest sector at over 30% of all jobs;
- Tourism and Retail are large service sectors accounting for 13% and 11% of jobs respectively; and

- Manufacturing accounts for around 11% of jobs⁶⁴.

- 3.5.8 The County's economy has core strengths and opportunities in key sectors such as energy, low carbon industries, certain manufacturing and process industries such as pharmaceuticals and engineering, ports, and tourism.
- 3.5.9 The agriculture sector has suffered decline in terms of its share of the employment structure but when compared to the England average remains significant as a proportion of economic activity overall and particularly in the rural economy of the County.
- 3.5.10 The distribution of full-time and part-time posts has altered significantly over the last 5 years with the number of full-time employees increasing by 5% but the number of part-time posts decreasing by 17%. Part-time employment in key local sectors like retail, healthcare and tourism contributes to a low-paid local economy and has a significant impact on productivity measures including GVA performance.
- 3.5.11 There is out commuting from Northumberland for employment, mainly to Tyneside – amounting to 23,000 people in 2011. A report prepared by Peter Brett Associates⁶⁵ has looked at the successful sectors of the economy in Northumberland.

Employment Land

- 3.5.12 The housing growth options report⁶⁶ prepared by Peter Brett Associates shows that economic activity is unevenly spread across Northumberland with a concentration of businesses in the south eastern part of the County. Other than this area of the County Berwick and Alnwick are the only places where there significant numbers of businesses. This report highlights that in terms of the stock and quality of employment land, the best sites were found to be concentrated in the South East with an undersupply of unconstrained, available land in Hexham, Ponteland, Prudhoe and Morpeth and that overall, there is an oversupply of employment land in the County.
- 3.5.13 This growth options report also highlights that in net terms, 19,000sqm of employment floorspace has been lost in Northumberland since 2014. In addition to this, the Council has identified a pipeline of 43,400sqm with planning permission.
- 3.5.14 The Northumberland Employment Land take up study 1999-2017⁶⁷ provides a review of past rates and spatial patterns of the take-up of allocated employment land, as well as its development for other types of commercial activity or other types of land use such as housing. The study shows that in 2016 and for the County as a whole, 242a of employment land was identified as available with the majority in the South East delivery area (167ha) and the smallest proportion in the West delivery area (8ha). Since 1999 there has been a net gain of 19.8ha in employment land over that period.

Economic Performance

- 3.5.15 The Gross Value Added is a measure in economics of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy. The Northumberland economy has grown by an average rate of 3.4% per annum between 1997 (9,723) and 2015 (15,950) with only 1999 (9,446) and

⁶⁴ Northumberland Economic Strategy 2015-2020.

⁶⁵ Peter Brett Associates Housing and Economic Growth Options: Findings Report (June 2018).

⁶⁶ Peter Brett Associates Housing and Economic Growth Options: Findings Report (June 2018).

⁶⁷ Available at <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Economy%20Retail%20Studies/4.%20Employment%20Land%20Takeup/Employment-Land-Take-up-Study-1999-2017.pdf>

2009 (13,733) experiencing a decline in Total Gross Value Added (GVA). However, Northumberland's economy remains smaller than the economies of nearby areas.

- 3.5.16 The Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head in Northumberland increased by % between 1997 (£10,586) and 2015 (£19,385), an average increase of 5% per annum.⁶⁸ In 2015 the GDHI for the North East was less than that of Northumberland's at £16,197 and the average for England was slightly higher than Northumberland's at £19,447⁶⁹.

Skills and Education

- 3.5.17 Northumberland performs above the average for the country and North East in terms of the numbers of people holding a qualification. As show in **Table 3.8** below only 9.1% of the working age population do not hold a qualification of any type. Within Northumberland, the former Blyth Valley district has the highest percentage of working age people with no qualifications. The percentage of people with the highest level of qualification (NVQ4 or above) is 32.7% in Northumberland compared to 38.2% for Britain while the North East attained 31.4%⁷⁰.

Table 3.8 Qualifications in Northumberland January – December 2016

	Northumberland (numbers)	Northumberland (%)	North East (%)	Great Britain (%)
NVQ4 and above	61,100	32.7	31.4	38.2
NVQ3 and above	95,700	51.2	52.3	56.9
NVQ2 and above	135,300	72.5	73.7	74.3
NVQ1 and above	160,700	86.1	85.3	85.3
Other qualifications	9,100	4.9	5.4	6.6
No qualifications	16,900	9.1	9.4	8.0

Source: ONS annual population survey via Nomis (2018): <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157061/report.asp>

- 3.5.18 There has been a continual improvement in qualifications over the last ten years in Northumberland. In December 2004, 80.7% of working age people had any qualifications which compared to the comparable figure in 2016 of 90.9%⁷¹. With continual improvement in facilities and improved teaching methods this trend is anticipated to continue.
- 3.5.19 These figures conceal a more complex picture, with differences between different areas of Northumberland. The Northumberland Economic Strategy establishes that people living in the central area of the County are much more likely to have higher qualifications and to work in high-level occupations than residents of much of South East and rural Northumberland. A significant proportion of the County's highest earners work in the Tyneside conurbation rather than in Northumberland.
- 3.5.20 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁷² highlights that Northumberland is served by 16 school partnerships covering 166 schools, with additional special schools and Roman Catholic

⁶⁸ ONS (2018) Regional Disposable Household Income.

⁶⁹ ONS (2018) Regional GVA.

⁷⁰ ONS annual population survey via Nomis (2016) <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports>

⁷¹ Source: ONS annual population survey via Nomis (2018)

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157061/report.aspx#tabquals>

⁷² Available at <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Infrastructure%20Studies/NCC-IDP-Part-1-July-2018-Low-Res.pdf>

partnerships. The plan also highlights that some schools, particularly small rural schools are undersubscribed. Primary and secondary schools capacity is a mixed picture with some schools having spare capacity and other schools oversubscribed. For example, Bede Academy Partnership's primary schools are oversubscribed with Newsham School running at 105% capacity and New Delaval School operating at 111%. However, Bedlington Partnerships schools are only running at 94% capacity.

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

- 3.5.21 Northumberland has an unemployment rate of 5.3% which compares favourably with North East England (6.5%) but unfavourably to the average unemployment of Great Britain (4.5%). Northumberland is a supplier of highly skilled labour to North East England, however a significant minority of people do not have the skills and qualifications they need to take advantage of opportunities locally or externally and there are pockets of deprivation featuring hidden poverty, especially in the South East of the County. This can be seen in unemployment hotspots such as Blyth, which has never quite recovered from the decline of the coal mining or heavy manufacturing industries and has a high proportion of residents with no or few official qualifications. However, only 9.1% of the working age population has no official qualifications. Northumberland also exceeds North East England's level of people with the highest tier of education (NVQ Level 4 or above) at 32.7%.
- 3.5.22 Northumberland is therefore in the difficult situation of having to increase its employment opportunities across all skill levels across the County. If this is not done, there is a risk of unemployment growing within Northumberland across all working age demographics, which would be a reverse of the decline in unemployment that can be seen since 2013. There is also the risk of Northumberland's overall economic growth, which has continued to grow each year since 1997 (besides 1999 and 2009) stalling if further and diverse employment opportunities are not made available. The creation of new jobs (particularly higher skilled) within Northumberland could also potentially aid in reducing the difference between Northumberland's average gross weekly pay (£521.70) to that of the North East (£504.10) or Great Britain's as a whole (£552.70).
- 3.5.23 If the employment opportunities are not increased, with jobs of varying skill requirements spread across the County, it is likely that that Northumberland will increasingly be a source of significant commuting outflows, with consequential effects on the economy. Ensuring that new development needs can grow the economy could be more difficult to achieve without a Local Plan that would have economic growth as an integral part of its strategy. Furthermore, without local planning policy relating to the quantum, type and location of new employment related development, the extent to which new development meets the needs of Northumberland's communities and businesses would be more uncertain as, to a large extent, the key decisions over where development is located would be left solely to the market. This could undermine the potential for new development to help boost local economic and skills development. The lack of local planning policy could also result in the objectives of other plans and programmes, including the Council's 2015 Economic Strategy and the North East Strategic Economic Plan being unfulfilled.
- 3.5.24 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁷³ (IDP) highlights that existing or anticipated pressures on education provision relate to a number of areas in the County, including Cramlington where new provision is required to support the level of new housing growth. There are other settlements in Northumberland such as Morpeth, Blyth and Hexham that may also be subject to future pressures and thus requiring updated, new or extended provision.

⁷³ Available at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Infrastructure%20Studies/NCC-IDP-Part-1-July-2018-Low-Res.pdf>

- 3.5.25 Countywide the IDP highlights that it is expected that additional provision will be required to address special education needs provision and also additional pre-school provision. There is a cross flow of pupils between catchment areas, including pupils from outside of Northumberland, including Newcastle.

Key Sustainability Issues

- Overall, the need to create sustainable places where people want to work;
- The need to deliver a range of employment sites to support economic growth and diversify the local economy in a sustainable manner that protects the environment whilst allowing social and economic progress;
- The need to ensure a flexible supply of land for employment development;
- The need to tackle pockets of high unemployment and low education attainment;
- The need to increase wage growth and disposable income across the County;
- The need to reflect the aims and objectives of the Northumberland Economic Strategy 2015-2020.

3.6 Transport and Accessibility

Transport Infrastructure

- 3.6.1 The principal roads in Northumberland are the A1, A69, and A19 trunk roads and the A68, A696, A697 and A189 county roads. The East Coast Main Line and Tyne Valley railway lines pass through Northumberland and provide limited local services and access to the inter-city routes serving the rest of the country.
- 3.6.2 The East Coast Main Line also provides travel links between London and Scotland. More locally, the Tyne Valley Railway line connects the west of the County with Gateshead and Newcastle City Centre and a local service runs between Newcastle and Morpeth/Chathill. These main lines are well travelled.
- 3.6.3 Local bus services form a network throughout south east Northumberland linking the main towns of Blyth, Cramlington, Ashington, Bedlington and Morpeth to each other and Newcastle upon Tyne. In addition there are express bus services to Northumberland towns, including Alnwick, Berwick upon Tweed and Hexham to Newcastle upon Tyne. Some areas of rural Northumberland are considered unviable for the supply of commercial bus services.
- 3.6.4 There are also a number of freight lines that are still in use and part of Newcastle Airport lies within Northumberland.
- 3.6.5 Car ownership in Northumberland is slightly higher than the national average and much greater than in the North East as a whole. Car ownership is particularly high in the former Alnwick, Castle Morpeth and Tynedale areas. The number of cars and vans available to households in Northumberland increased by 26,600 (19%) to 169,000 between 2001 and 2011. The North East saw a larger percentage increase of 20% (194,800) but the percentage increase in England was lower at 14% (3,089,200).⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Census (2011) ONS.

Movement

- 3.6.6 According to the 2011 Census, the average distance travelled to work by Northumberland residents was 21.4km in 2011. **Table 3.9** compares the distance travelled to work by residents in 2001 and 2011 and highlights how a larger proportion of the residents of Northumberland are having to travel further for work. This can be seen with a reduction in the number of residents traveling less than 2km to work whilst there has been growth in the number of residents falling into categories of travel distance larger than 10km.

Table 3.9 Distance Travelled to Work 2001 and 2011

Distance Travelled to Work	Number of People (2001)	% of People in Employment (2001)	Number of People (2011)	% of People in Employment (2011)
Less than 2 km	29,037	21.33	25,944	17.6
2 km to less than 5 km	14,614	10.7	14,491	9.9
5 km to less than 10 km	19,546	14.36	19,568	13.3
10 km to less than 20 km	29,345	21.6	30,255	20.6
20 km to less than 30 km	11,539	8.5	12,969	8.8
30 km to less than 40 km	4,515	3.31	5,666	3.8
40 km to less than 60 km	3,134	2.3	4,162	2.8
60 km and over	4,208	3.09	5,593	3.8
Working from home	14,687	10.8	17,894	12.18
Other	5,458	4.01	10,359	7.05

Source: Census 2011

- 3.6.7 Commuting flows indicate that there is a significant outflow of commuters from the Northumberland Area alongside considerably smaller inflow. In 2011, a total of 23,527 workers commuted into Northumberland from other local authorities whilst 45,551 residents commuted out of Northumberland. This represents a net outflow of 22,024 workers.
- 3.6.8 **Figure 3.6 below** shows the workplace destinations of the Northumberland Areas workforce for 2011. It demonstrates that the majority of residents commuted to the authority of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (19,289 people) followed by the neighbouring authorities of North Tyneside (10,506) and Gateshead (4,691). Similarly, the areas of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (6,275), North Tyneside (6,256) and Gateshead (3,592) are the origin of the most in-commuters to Northumberland.

Figure 3.6 Workplace Destinations



Source: NOMIS (2014) Location of usual residence and place of work by method of travel to work. Available online: <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/WU03UK/chart/1132462182>

Information and Communications

- 3.6.9 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁷⁵ highlights that the Council is delivering the iNorthumberland⁷⁶ programme which aims to provide fibre broadband to 95% of homes and businesses in Northumberland by the end of 2018. Openreach won the contract for delivering fibre broadband in Northumberland. They are also responsible for maintaining and upgrading communications infrastructure (fibres, wires and cables) across the Country.

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

- 3.6.10 Northumberland has good rail connections to the rest of the UK through the East Coast Main Line which provides access to London and Scotland and the Tyne Valley Railway which connects the west of the UK with Northumberland and North East England. However, outside of the main lines there is no passenger rail travel available though this is not uncommon given the size and expense of railway systems. It is important that new employment and housing developments consider how connected they are to the local rail network to improve the number of journeys undertaken using sustainable transport methods.
- 3.6.11 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) highlights that a key priority of the Council is the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the existing 'Northumberland Line' (formerly referred to as the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line) which is currently a freight only line. Significant steps have been made in taking long-held aspirations for the line forward in various ways and that it is hoped that the line could potentially reopen to passenger services by 2022. The IDP also highlights that a further long term opportunity exists to link Ponteland to the Tyne and Wear Metro,
- 3.6.12 The issues of sustainable transport can be seen across Northumberland. Whilst the Main Towns and Service Centres have local bus services, some areas of rural Northumberland do not have a bus

⁷⁵ Available online at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Infrastructure%20Studies/NCC-IDP-Part-1-July-2018-Low-Res.pdf>

⁷⁶ More info at: <http://www.inorthumberland.org.uk/>

service. Furthermore, car ownership in Northumberland is slightly higher than the national average and this continues to increase each year. Northumberland is therefore facing the issue of having limited public transport options and high car ownership which only increases as more people in the rural parts of Northumberland can't access bus or train services.

- 3.6.13 Comparatively, the main roads of Northumberland are in good condition and the A1, A69 and A19 trunk roads and A68, A696, A697 and A189 county roads provide good coverage of Northumberland and generally do not suffer too much from congestion.
- 3.6.14 Northumberland has a considerable net commuting outflow of workers, something which increased between 2001 and 2011.
- 3.6.15 Northumberland therefore faces the complicated issue of a dispersed population, with bus and rail services predominantly focused in the more urban areas of the County, with workers having to commute increasingly larger distances and commuting outside of the County. Some of these journeys will be by sustainable transport modes but there will also be a degree of commuting by car. This will make the chances of Northumberland achieving the national transport goals of reducing carbon emissions, promote equality of opportunity, contribute to better, safety, security and health and improve quality of life and healthy natural environment more difficult⁷⁷.
- 3.6.16 Without the Local Plan there would be a significant planning policy gap with regard to the location of future growth. This gap could result in development being located in areas that are not well served by community facilities and services and jobs thereby leading to an increase in transport movements. It could also result in development being located in areas not well served by sustainable transport modes. Currently, the County experiences high levels of out-commuting which could be reduced through the allocation, in the Local Plan, of accessible employment sites that deliver local employment opportunities. Without Local Plan policy coverage, opportunities may be missed to adopt a strategic approach to investment in transport infrastructure that reflects the priorities of the Local Transport Plan and plans that may come from the North East or North of Tyne Combined Authority initiatives as well as plans that may and responds appropriately to the County's wider objectives in respect of growth and environmental protection and enhancement.
- 3.6.17 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan highlights that whilst the iNorthumberland Programme for broadband improvements is on target, there are risks to achieving 100% coverage due to the rural nature of parts of the County, where it may prove too expensive to deliver. This could result in an increased divide between those with improved internet speeds and those without. Without the local plan, opportunities may be missed to capture developer contributions towards improving internet speeds in areas which may otherwise lose out.

Key Sustainability Issues

- Continue to maintain a congestion free road system;
- The need to ensure timely investment in transport infrastructure and services;
- The need to enhance the connectivity of the more rural settlements to an efficient and sustainable transport system which provides access to jobs and services;
- The need to encourage a modal shift away from car usage to more sustainable forms of transportation;

⁷⁷ Northumberland Local Transport Plan for 2011 to 2026. Available online at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Roads-streets-and-transport/transport%20policy/Local%20Transport%20Plan/Local-Transport-Plan-2011-2026.pdf>

- The need to ensure new developments are accessible to community facilities and jobs and can be accessed by a number of different transport methods;
- The need to reduce out commuting; and
- The need to address areas with slow internet speeds.

3.7 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

Designated Nature Conservations Sites

- 3.7.1 Biodiversity is defined as the variety of plants (flora) and animals (fauna) in an area, and their associated habitats. The importance of preserving biodiversity is recognised from an international to a local level. Biodiversity is important in its own right and has value in terms of quality of life and amenity.
- 3.7.2 Northumberland has a rich and varied natural environment including a range of sites designated for their habitat and conservation value.
- 3.7.3 Sites of European importance (Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)) are designated to conserve natural habitats and species of wildlife which are rare, endangered or vulnerable in the European Community (EC). In the UK, these form part of the 'Natura 2000' network of sites protected under the EC Habitats Directive (1992). **Table 3.10** and **Table 3.11** lists the seven SPAs and thirteen SACs located within or partially within Northumberland.

Table 3.10 Special Protection Areas in Northumberland

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	
Coquet Island	North Pennine Moors
Lindisfarne	Holburn Lake and Moss
Farne Island	Northumbria Coast
Northumberland Marine	

Table 3.11 Special Areas of Conservation

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	
Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast	Border Mires, Kielder – Butterburn
Ford Moss	Harbottle Moors
Newham Fen	North Northumberland Dunes
North Pennine Dales Meadows	North Pennine Moors
River Tweed	Roman Wall Loughs
Simonside Hills	Tyne and Allen River Gravels
Tweed Estuary	

Source: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/>

3.7.4 The conservation objectives for all of the sites have been revised by Natural England in recent years to increase consistency of assessment and reporting. As a result, the high-level conservation objectives for all sites are broadly comparable.

3.7.5 For SPAs the objectives are:

"With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features'...), and subject to natural change; ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:

- *The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;*
- *The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;*
- *The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;*
- *The population of each of the qualifying features; and*
- *The distribution of the qualifying features within the site."*

3.7.6 The objectives for SACs are:

"With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features'...), and subject to natural change; ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring [as applicable to each site];

- *The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats;*
- *The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;*
- *The structure and function (including typical species) of the qualifying natural habitats;*
- *The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;*
- *The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely;*
- *The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely;*
- *The populations of qualifying species; and*
- *The distribution of qualifying species within the site."*

3.7.7 Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Within Northumberland there are four Ramsar sites. The heath bog areas of the Irthinghead Mires, Holburn Lake and Moss and the coastal edge and tidal areas around Lindisfarne and the Northumbria Coast have been designated as wetlands of international importance.

3.7.8 Marine conservation zones (MCZs) are designated under the UK Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Unlike SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites, which are designed to protect rare, threatened or vulnerable habitats and species, MCZs are designed to protect marine habitats and species typical of UK marine features. There are six MCZ's designated off the Northumberland coast. These are; Aln Estuary, North East of Farnes Deep, Swallow Sands, Coquet to St Mary's, Farnes East and Fulmar; however it is the Aln Estuary MCZ and Coquet to St Mary's MCZ that are adjacent to the coastline. The Aln Estuary MCZ was designated in 2013 because of its intertidal mud deposits, saltmarshes and unusual estuarine rocky habitats, which combined creates an environment capable of supporting a diverse range of species. The Coquet to St Mary's MCZ was designated in 2016

because of the complex habitat the zones, rock, sand, mud and sediments support. This MCZ also protects a considerable range of intertidal habitats.

- 3.7.9 A 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI) gives legal protection to the best sites for wildlife and geology in England. SSSIs are managed to conserve the special features and geology which in turn protects rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features that may be supported within that area.
- 3.7.10 In Northumberland there are 113 sites designated as SSSI. Natural England reports on the condition of SSSIs, grading them into six categories. Northumberland, along with the North East and England is meeting the Government's target of 95% of SSSI land being classed as in 'favourable' or 'recovering' condition, with the figure sitting at 99.11%.

Local Wildlife Sites and Nature Reserves

- 3.7.11 There are a number of sites within Northumberland that have local biodiversity importance, such as Local Wildlife and Geological Sites (LWGSs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). Locally designated sites, although not of the same status as international or national sites, have an important role to play in contributing to overall biodiversity targets and to the quality of life and well-being of communities. LNRs are for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it recreationally. There are 25 LNRs in Northumberland.⁷⁸
- 3.7.12 Ancient woodland is land that has had a continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD, and may be ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), which retains a native tree and shrub cover that has not been planted, although it may have been managed by coppicing or felling and allowed to regenerate naturally; or plantation on ancient woodland sites (PAWS), where the original tree cover has been felled and replaced by planting, often with conifers, and usually over the last century.
- 3.7.13 Ancient woodlands are particularly important because they are exceptionally rich in wildlife, including many rare species and habitats; are an integral part of England's historic landscapes; and act as reservoirs from which wildlife can spread into new woodlands. The location of ancient woodlands over 2 ha in area is recorded in the National Inventory of Ancient Woodlands, which is maintained by Natural England. **Table 3.12** identifies the area of ancient woodland in Northumberland separated into the various woodland types and the split between Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS).

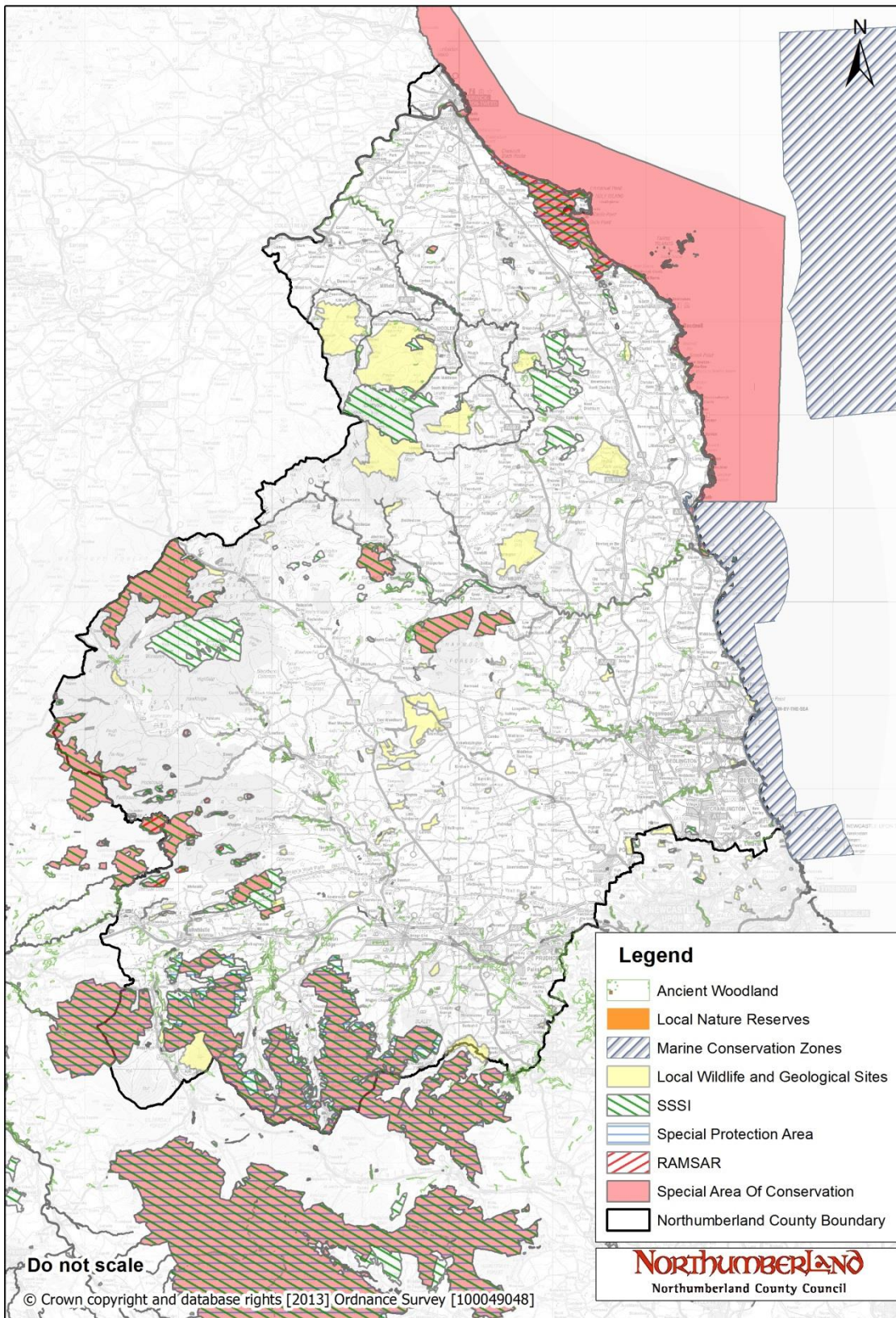
Table 3.12 Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites

Woodland type	ASNW (HA)	PAWS (HA)	Total Ancient (HA)
Upland Oak	1444	1646	3090
Upland Ash	1,205	505	1710
Lowland Mixed Broadleaf	399	270	669
Wet	163	11	174
Juniper	11	0	11
Total	3,222	2,432	5,654

⁷⁸ Natural England (2013) http://www.lnr.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/lnr/lnr_results.asp?N=&C=31&Submit=Search [Accessed 16.9.13].

- 3.7.14 It is estimated that there are 5,654 hectares of Ancient Woodland in Northumberland, this amounts to approximately 0.5% of the County area. Key results from the Northumberland Native Woodland Project - A survey of the extent and condition of Ancient Woodlands in Northumberland (July 2006) indicate that 61% of Ancient Woodland (ASNW and PAWS) is in an unfavourable declining or partially destroyed condition and that is likely to continue to decline without the introduction of sustainable woodland management.
- 3.7.15 **Figure 3.7** below shows the designated sites, wildlife sites and nature reserves that are present in or partially within Northumberland.

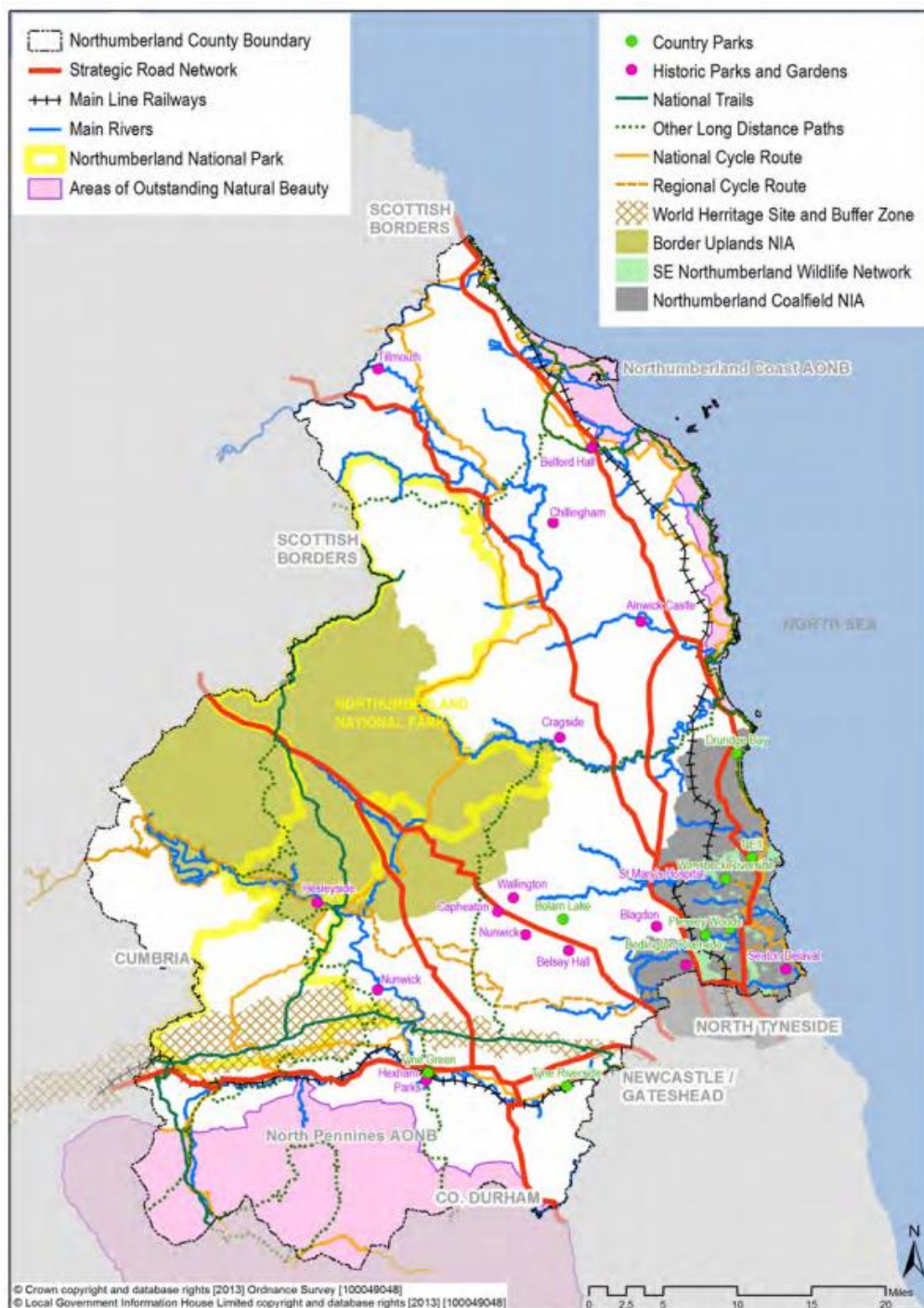
Figure 3.7 Designated Wildlife Sites within Northumberland



Green Infrastructure

3.7.16 Green infrastructure encompasses all “green” assets in an authority area, including parks, river corridors and street trees, managed and unmanaged sites and designed and planted open spaces. A Green Infrastructure Study for Northumberland was published in 2011 to provide a strategic framework to ensure the provision of good quality, well-managed, readily accessible and multifunctional green infrastructure across Northumberland and beyond. It identifies the green infrastructure network on a regional and sub regional basis. **Figure 3.8** below shows the strategic green infrastructure sites and corridors in Northumberland.

Figure 3.8 Strategic Green Infrastructure Sites and Corridors



Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

- 3.7.17 Northumberland is home to a wide variety of biodiversity rich sites from international to local designation.
- 3.7.18 It is assumed that the number of designated sites would be unlikely to alter substantially in the foreseeable future. The development of further species action plans would provide an improved foundation for the protection of the various species and increase awareness of their locations so measures may be put in place for enhanced protection.
- 3.7.19 Northumberland managed to achieve 31.76% of its SSSIs receiving 'favourable' status, which was below the Government established target of 50% by 2010. However, the number of Northumberland's SSSI in a 'favourable' condition should increase with time as 71.61% of Northumberland's SSSI are currently considered to be 'recovering'.
- 3.7.20 Northumberland's ancient woodlands are unfortunately in a much weaker state with 61% Ancient Woodland and PAWS in unfavourable declining or partially destroyed condition. This level of decline has continued meaning important incredibly important wildlife rich areas are being steadily lost or compromised across the County.
- 3.7.21 Northumberland has a high number of green spaces and parks that are considered to be of high quality and these are scattered across the County.
- 3.7.22 The Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) identifies a number of factors that have the potential to adversely affect biodiversity:
- Recreational pressure;
 - Development;
 - Habitat fragmentation;
 - Nutrient enrichment;
 - Unsuitable management;
 - Sterilisation of the 'wild' through over tidiness;
 - Invasive species;
 - Climate change; and
 - Vandalism.
- 3.7.23 The BAP also identifies habitats and species of importance to Northumberland. These include:

Habitats

- Blanket bog;
- Coastal heathland;
- Reedbed;
- Rocky shore, reefs and islands;
- Upland hay meadows;
- Heather moorland; and
- Whin grassland.

Species

- Barn owl;
- Black Grouse;
- Common Seal;
- Otter;
- River Jelly Lichen;
- Water Vole;
- Dingy Skipper;
- Freshwater Pearl Mussel;
- Great Crested Newt; and
- White Clawed Crayfish.

3.7.24 There are a number of ongoing initiatives and projects in the County that will help to conserve and enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure and which would be expected to continue without the Local Plan. These include, for example, ongoing mining site restoration schemes.

3.7.25 It is reasonable to assume that without the Local Plan, existing trends would continue. However, whilst national planning policy contained in the NPPF would help to ensure that new development protects and enhances biodiversity, a lack of specific local planning policy support may result in the inappropriate location and design of development which could have a negative effect on overall biodiversity in the County. Further, opportunities may be lost to plan at the strategic level green infrastructure provision which could provide biodiversity enhancements through, for example, habitat creation schemes and also to ensure that new developments incorporate green infrastructure and green spaces into their design.

Key Sustainability Issues

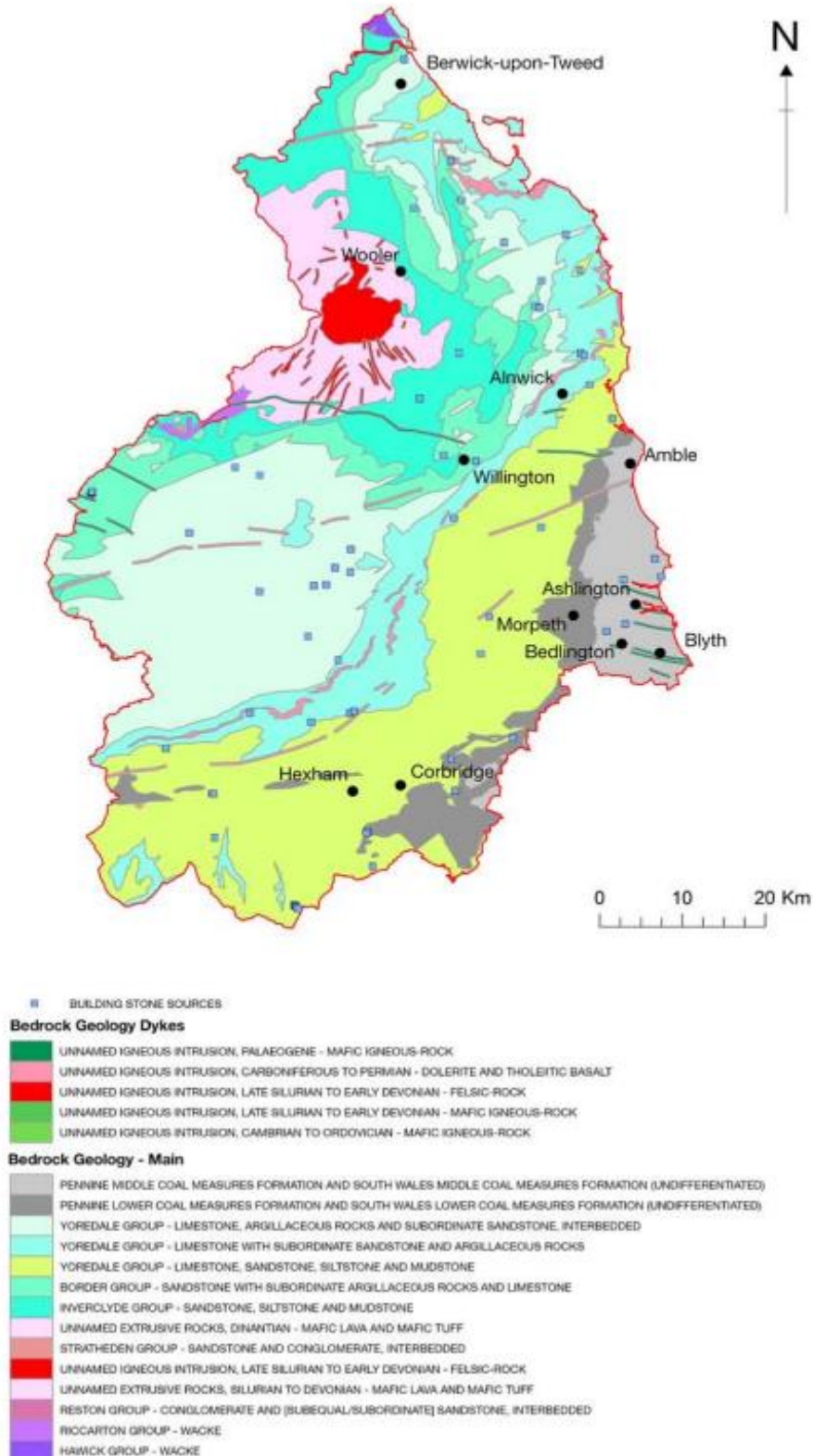
- The need to conserve and enhance biodiversity including sites designated for their nature conservation value;
- The need to protect the conservation objectives of all designated sites;
- The need to safeguard existing green infrastructure assets;
- The need to enhance the green infrastructure network, addressing deficiencies and gaps, improving accessibility for all users and encouraging multiple uses where appropriate;
- The need to reverse the decline in Ancient Woodland and planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS) quality and stop their continued destruction; and
- The need to continue to improve the condition of nationally and internationally designated nature conservation sites to ensure more are assessed as being in a 'favourable' condition.

3.8 Geology, Soils and Land Use

Geology

- 3.8.1 The bedrock geology of Northumberland is outlined in **Figure 3.9** below. The solid geology of Northumberland is primarily comprised of Carboniferous sediments which stretch across the majority of the County. The south east of Northumberland is primarily comprised of Pennine Middle and Pennine Lower Coal formations alongside Yoredale Group (limestone, sandstone, siltstone and mudstone). The centre of Northumberland is comprised of Yoredale Groups comprised of limestone with subordinate sandstone, argillaceous rocks and subordinate sandstone. The north of Northumberland is primarily comprised of a mixture of unnamed igneous intrusions, unnamed extrusive rocks and border group (sandstone with subordinate sandstone and argillaceous rocks).
- 3.8.2 The drift geology of Northumberland is primarily comprised of a mixture of alluvium clay, silt and sand; peat; glacial sand and gravel; river terrace deposits and brown sand.
- 3.8.3 The Whin Sill or Great Whin Sill is a 70m thick tabular layer of dolerite that stretches from Teesdale northwards towards Berwick-upon-Tweed. It slopes (dips) gently to the south beneath the overlying sedimentary rocks. It is a major outcrop and forms a number of key natural features in the North Pennines. Bamburgh Castle, Dunstanburgh Castle, Lindisfarne Castle and stretches of Hadrian's Wall all strategically take advantage of high, rocky cliff lines formed by the Sill.
- 3.8.4 The former working of the Northumberland Coalfield influenced the development of the County's economy.

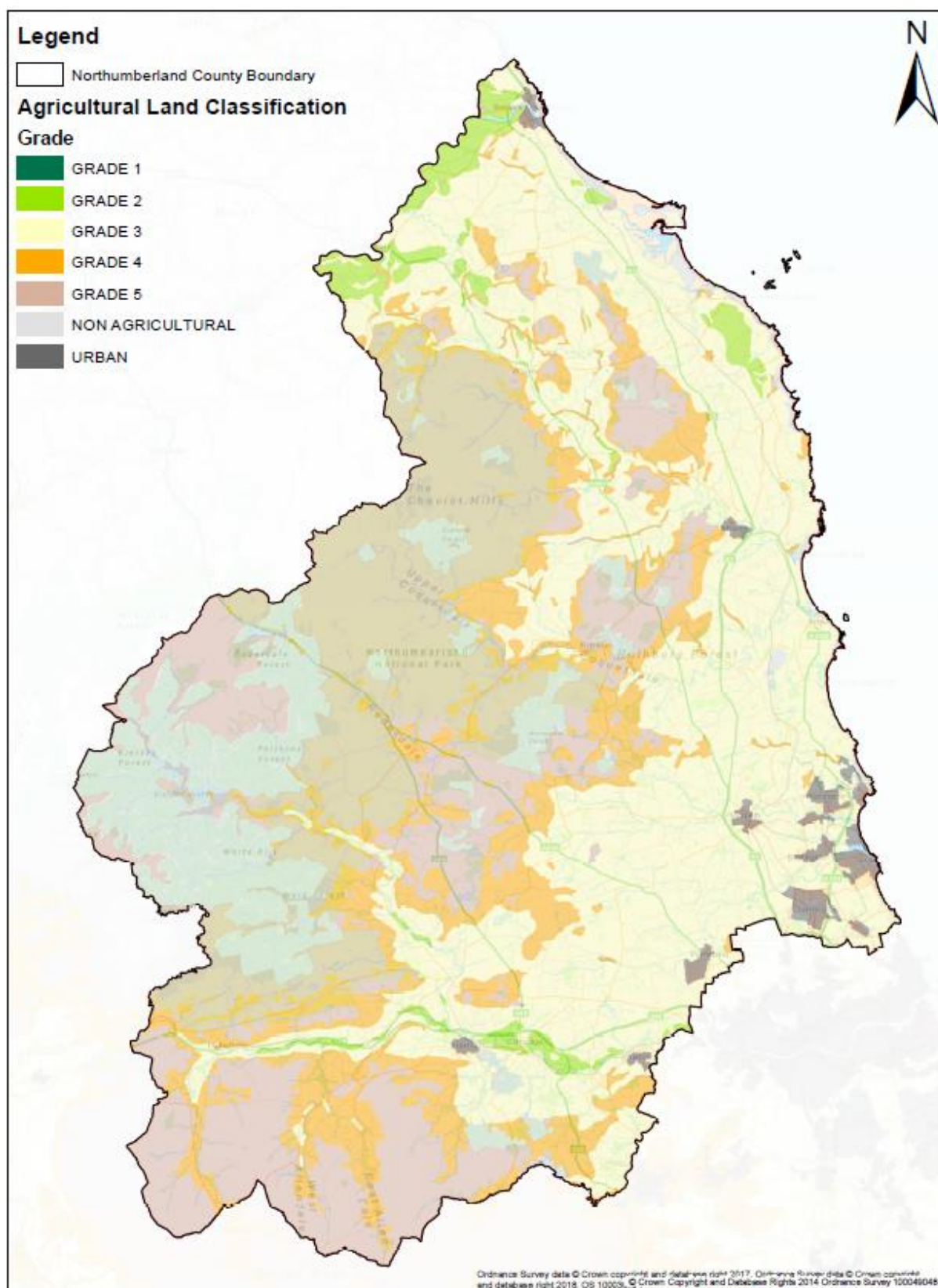
Figure 3.9 Northumberland Bedrock Geology



Soils

- 3.8.5 Agricultural land in England is classified under the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) into five grades, with Grade 1 being the best quality and Grade 5 the poorest quality. The 'best and most versatile land' is defined by the NPPF as that which falls into Grades 1, 2 and 3a. The majority of the County is classified as Grade 3 under the ALC, with areas of Grade 4 and 5 in the more upland areas in the west of the County. There is very little Grade 2 and no Grade 1 land within the County.
- 3.8.6 **Figure 3.10** below shows the Agricultural Land Classification for Northumberland.

Figure 3.10 Agricultural Land Classifications in Northumberland



Land Use

- 3.8.7 **Table 3.13** shows the percentage of dwellings built on previously developed land (PDL) in Northumberland from 2009 to 2016/17. The percentage of housing delivered on PDL in Northumberland has been declining in Northumberland since 2013/14, with the overall amount of PDL in 2015/16 dropping to 37%; although it did increase in 2016/17.

Table 3.13 Percentage of New Dwellings Built on Previously Developed Land

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Northumberland	70%	61%	70%	78%	61%	52%	37%	47%	39%

Source: Various Northumberland County Council Studies and Evidence Reports on Housing⁷⁹

- 3.8.8 Information from the Council's latest net additional homes report⁸⁰ shows that of the gross homes delivered in 2017/18, 555 units were delivered on PDL which equates to 39%. This report notes that (and as shown in the table above) the proportion of housing delivered on previously-developed land has decreased over recent years as brownfield sites that were suitable for housing have increasingly been built out, coupled with an increasing number of completions on a range of large previously-undeveloped greenfield sites.
- 3.8.9 Given Northumberland's rural nature and the fact that Northumberland does not have the same levels of dereliction that is found elsewhere in the North East (in addition to the fact that the County has already reclaimed large areas of derelict sites) there is an issue regarding whether the County can continue to maintain a high proportion of new dwellings being built on previously developed land.
- 3.8.10 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) indicates future housing land supply is likely to mostly be greenfield. An important consideration also is the contribution that some previously developed land may have in relation to nature conservation and the value of biodiversity on such sites.
- 3.8.11 Around half of the residents within Northumberland live in 5% of urban land found in the south east of the County. The remaining half are widely dispersed throughout Northumberland's many smaller towns and villages and small clusters of housing.

Land Contamination

- 3.8.12 The Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination (CLR11) have been developed to provide the technical framework for applying a risk management process when dealing with land affected by contamination.
- 3.8.13 The process involves identifying, making decisions on, and taking appropriate action to deal with land contamination in a way that is consistent with government policies and legislation within the UK.
- 3.8.14 The model procedures consist of three parts:

⁷⁹ See for example: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Housing%20Studies/8.%20Net%20additional%20homes/Net-Additional-Homes-Provided-15-16-DIN-release.pdf>

⁸⁰ Available at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Housing%20Studies/8.%20Net%20additional%20homes/Net-Additional-Homes-Provided-2017-18.pdf>

- Procedures;
- Supporting information; and
- Information map.

- 3.8.15 These provide a hierarchy of information in which part 1 sets out the framework of the risk management process, part 2 provides further technical detail to support the process and part 3 contains sources of further information and guidance.
- 3.8.16 These procedures are intended to assist all those involved in dealing with land contamination, including landowners, developers, professional advisors, regulatory bodies and financial providers.
- 3.8.17 The Guiding Principles for Land Contamination are a package of guidance that replaced the 'Environment Agency requirements for land contamination reports'. These principles contain generic guidance with respect to land contamination.

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

- 3.8.18 National planning policy encourages the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed and also seeks to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land. However, if councils do not have a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements, the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development can often outweigh other national and local policy constraints.
- 3.8.19 Without clear and up-to-date local planning policy relating to the location of future development and the provision of sites to meet local needs, the Council would have less control over where development takes place. This could increase pressure to release greenfield sites for development to meet future growth and which in turn may result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Key Sustainability Issues

- The need to encourage development on previously developed (PDL) land;
- The need to make best use of existing buildings and infrastructure; and
- The need to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land.

3.9 Water

Water Quality

- 3.9.1 Ecological status and chemical status together define the overall surface water status of a watercourse under the Water Framework Directive. Ecological status applies to surface water bodies and is based on the following quality elements: biological quality, general chemical and physio-chemical quality, water quality with respect to specific pollutants (synthetic and non-synthetic), and hydromorphological quality. There are five classes of ecological status (high, good, moderate, poor or bad). Chemical status is assessed by compliance with the environmental standards for chemicals that are listed in the Environmental Quality Standards Directive 2008/105/EC⁸¹, which include

⁸¹ The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (2008) Environmental Quality Standards Directive 2008/105/EC. Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:348:0084:0097:EN:PDF> (accessed 25/01/18).

priority substances, priority hazardous substances and eight other pollutants. Furthermore, the level of risk that a number of pressure elements⁸² poses to a water body is graded by the EA.

- 3.9.2 The River Basin Management Plan for the Northumbria River Basin District (prepared by the EA in December 2015) includes information in relation to key characteristics and the water quality of Northumberland. It states that between 2009 – 2015, the percentage of all water bodies at 'good or better' overall status decreased significantly from 42% (2009) to 26% (2015). However, additional biological monitoring and improvements to the design of the monitoring network, put in place by the EA after 2009, revealed more symptoms of environmental issues. Therefore the change between 2009 and 2015 reported may not constitute a real environmental deterioration over this period. The River Basin Management Plan states that by 2021, the overall status of all water bodies is expected to improve slightly.
- 3.9.3 In 2021, 27% of surface waters are expected to be at good or better overall status, while 30% of groundwater bodies will be expected to be at good or better overall status. In combination 27% of all water bodies are projected to be at good or better status by 2021 (see **Table 3.14**).
- 3.9.4 An increased level of development could have an impact on designated nature conservation sites due to likely increases in flow from waste water treatment works to accommodate new development. These potential effects are explored in a detailed Water Cycle Study that has been prepared by AECOM on behalf of Northumberland County Council.

Table 3.14 Summary Statistics for the Northumbria River Basin District: Water Bodies

Percentage of Water Bodies at Good or Better Status	2015	2021
Surface waters combined	26%	27%
Groundwater	30%	30%
All water categories	26%	27%

Source: Environment Agency (2015 River Basin Management Plan, Northumbria River Basin District. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/500907/Northumbria_RBD_Part_1_river_basin_management_plan.pdf

- 3.9.5 The River Basin Management Plan for the Solway Tweed River Basin covers the Fell Sandstone Aquifer, which is the source of supply for the Berwick and Fowberry water resource zone. This aquifer is currently at poor status due to water quality issues (nitrates).

Water Resources

- 3.9.6 In terms of water supply, Northumberland is identified as an area of 'low water stress' by the EA. Northumbrian Water are responsible for water supply in the County. There are two Water Resource Zones (WRZ) in the Northumbrian Water area. The majority of the water is sourced from the Kielder WRZ however Berwick upon Tweed and Fowberry in the north of the county depend on groundwater supplies from the Fell Sandstone Aquifer.
- 3.9.7 Along with all water companies, Northumbrian Water has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive assessment of available water supplies and the demand for water well into the future, and set out the strategy for water resource and demand management to ensure supplies of safe, clean drinking water are maintained over the next 25 years. The Water Resource Management

⁸² Pressure elements include point source pollution risk, diffuse pollution risk, combined source sanitary risk, combined source nutrients risk, water abstraction and flow regulation risk, physical or morphological alteration risk, and alien species risk.

Plan (WRMP)⁸³ shows that there are adequate water resources to cater for the proposed development within the Kielder Water Resource Zone (WRZ). Proposed development in the Berwick and Fowberry WRZ can also be catered for within existing water resources. Northumbrian Water have published a draft Water Resources Management Plan for consultation which covers the next 40 years from 2020 to 2060. This draft plan also confirms that there are adequate water resources for Northumberland over the Local Plan period.

- 3.9.8 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁸⁴ states that a programme to refurbish and better maintain each borehole in the zone will be undertaken. This work will improve the output of each source and improve the resilience of the WRZ.
- 3.9.9 An Outline Water Cycle Study was published in 2012⁸⁵, highlighting that wastewater flow from the proposed level of development (in the emerging Core Strategy) across Northumberland could be accommodated within existing consent conditions by some of the waste water treatment works (WwTW).
- 3.9.10 This was supplemented with a detailed Water Cycle Study (Published on October 2015), which identifies that the following Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs) across Northumberland that currently have limited or no capacity to accept or treat any further wastewater from the proposed development. These works may require an upgrade to accommodate the new development. If a new hydraulic consent is required at these works then it is likely the quality consents will be tightened to ensure no deterioration in the water environment. In the majority of cases this is likely to be achievable within current conventional treatment.
- Hepscoth WwTW, Humshaugh WwTW, Wark WwTW, Great Whittington WwTW and Newbiggin WwTW - No Headroom Available and no solution currently identified but a solution is likely to be possible within limits of conventional treatment;
 - Tranwell WwTW - No Headroom Available and no solution available and WwTW cannot be upgraded;
 - Lynemouth WwTW and Haydon Bridge WwTW - No Headroom Available until infiltration is removed;
 - Rothbury WwTW, Cornhill on Tweed WwTW and Seahouses WwTW - No Headroom Available, NW Flow and Load investigations required;
 - Pegswood WwTW - No Headroom available and likely WQ consent constraints; and
 - Allendale WwTW, Barrasford WwTW and Fourstones WwTW - Limited Headroom Available until surface water ingress is removed.

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

- 3.9.11 The projected increase in the County's population will result in increased pressure on water resources which could affect water availability and quality. However, the Northumbrian Water WRMP indicates that there would be adequate water resources to support development.
- 3.9.12 The Water Cycle Study (2015) indicated that capacity at a number of wastewater treatment facilities could be a constraint to development. In consequence, a failure to plan strategically for new development and ensure the timely investment in infrastructure could place pressure on existing treatment facilities resulting in adverse water quality and wider environmental effects. Just over

⁸³ Northumbrian Water (2015) Final Water Resources Management Plan 2014.

⁸⁴ Available online at <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Infrastructure%20Studies/NCC-IDP-Part-1-July-2018-Low-Res.pdf>

⁸⁵ Northumberland County Council (2012) Outline Water Cycle Study (May, 2012).

half of the water bodies in Northumberland are not categorised as 'good status' or 'good potential' or above. Without a Local Plan that seeks to protect Northumberland's water bodies and actively seeks to improve their quality, there is potential for more of the County's water bodies to slip into decline or not have their quality improved.

3.9.13 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan highlights that planned upgrades to waste water treatment works include:

- Hexham – to refurbish the works and increase capacity;
- Alnmouth, Lynemouth and Pegswood – to increase capacity; and
- Eglingham – to upgrade and refurbish the works.

Key Sustainability Issues

- The need to protect and enhance the quality of water sources in the Northumberland Area;
- The need to promote the efficient use of water resources;
- The need to monitor water services infrastructure to ensure it can meet demand arising from new development and population increases; and
- The need to reflect the aims and objectives of the Northumberland River Basin Management Plan 2015.

3.10 Air Quality

3.10.1 Legislative frameworks and guidance in relation to air quality have been established at both the European and UK level. Policies aim to reduce exposure to specific pollutants by reducing emissions and setting targets for air quality. Policies are driven by the aims of the EU Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC)⁸⁶. The key objective is to help minimise the negative impacts on human health and the environment. The Directive sets guidance for member states for the effective implementation of air quality targets.

3.10.2 The UK's National Air Quality Strategy⁸⁷ sets health based standards for eight key pollutants and objectives for achieving them. This is to ensure a level of ambient air quality in public places that is safe for human health and quality of life. It also recognises that specific action at the local level may be needed depending on the scale and nature of the air quality problem.

3.10.3 Local authorities have a duty to undertake a full review and assessment of air quality in accordance with the National Air Quality Strategy. Where there is a likelihood of a national air quality objective being exceeded, the council must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives.

3.10.4 The main sources of air pollution in Northumberland is road traffic emissions from major roads, notably the A1, A69 and A19 trunk roads and the A68, A696, A697 and A189. Other pollution

⁸⁶European Commission (2008) Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. Available online: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32008L0050>

⁸⁷ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in partnership with the Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and Department of the Environment Northern Ireland (2007) *The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, Volume 1*. Available online: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69336/pb12654-air-quality-strategy-vol1-070712.pdf

sources, including commercial, industrial and domestic sources, also make a contribution to background pollution concentrations.

- 3.10.5 Northumberland had one AQMA in Blyth town centre. This was declared due the standard for particulates (PM10) caused by traffic, but was revoked in 2012. The air quality situation is likely to broadly remain at current level but the scale and form of future development could result in changes.

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

- 3.10.6 Northumberland in general does not suffer from air quality issues. Its main roads do not suffer from significant congestion although Northumberland does have quite high car usage and more people are travelling further to work. Blyth town centre was an AQMA but this was revoked in 2012 and no further AQMAs have been required in the County and the main air pollutant objective levels are being comfortably met. Without a Local Plan air quality would remain relatively the same. An increase in population and households in the County will in-turn generate additional transport movements and associated emissions to air. Without the Local Plan there would be a significant policy gap with regard to the location of future growth and which could result in development being located in areas that are not well served by community facilities and services and jobs thereby increasing traffic movements.

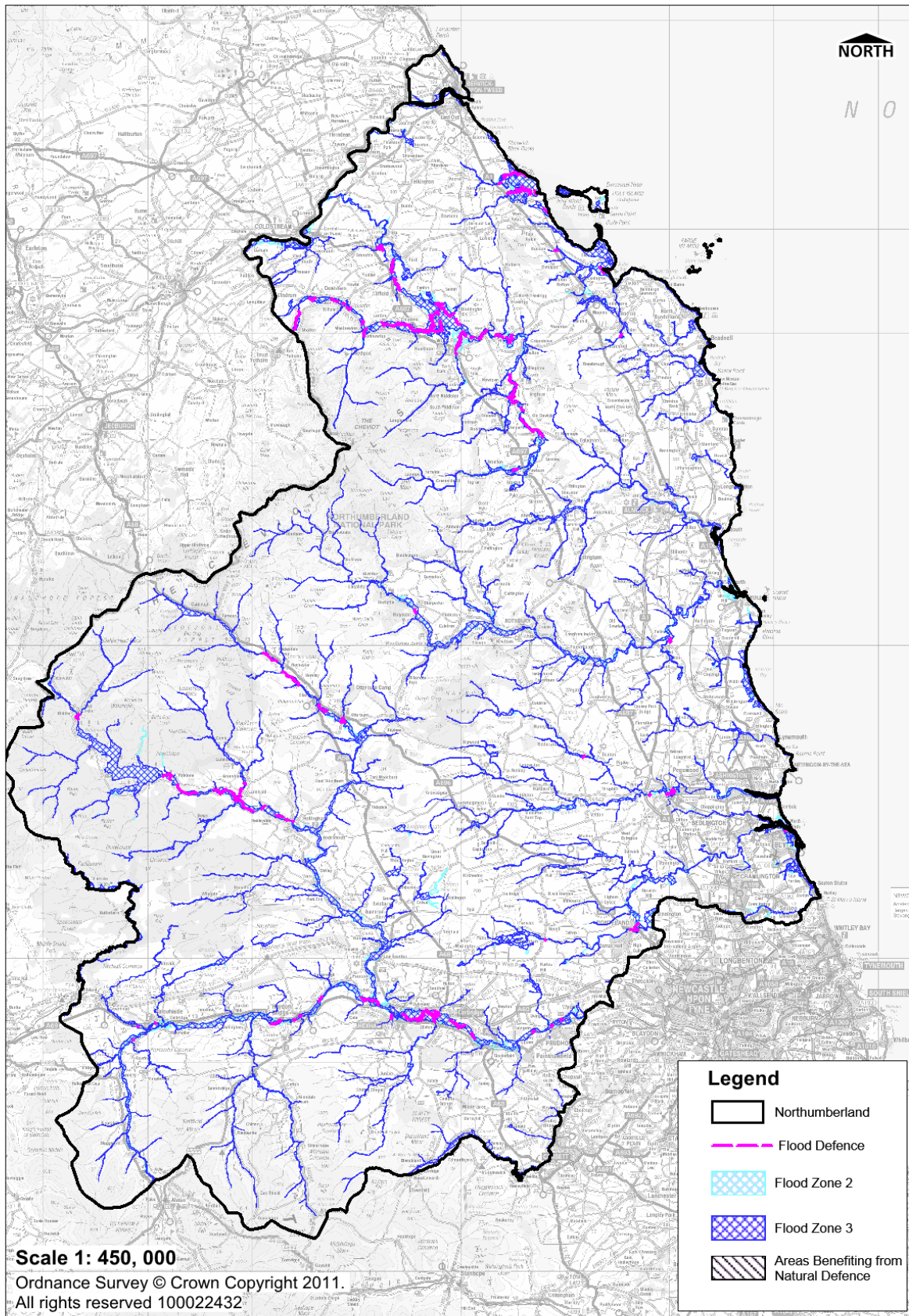
Key Sustainability Issues

- The need to minimise the emissions of pollutants into the air;
- The need to continue to ensure no area needs an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

3.11 Flood Risk and Coastal Change

- 3.11.1 The NPPF seeks to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at the plan making stage in order to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. **Figure 3.11** below shows the prevalence of Flood Zones 2 and 3 and the location of Flood Defences and areas benefiting from natural defences across Northumberland.
- 3.11.2 A level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was published in 2010 and a level 2 SFRA in 2015 (see **Figure 3.11**). The SFRA Flood zones are based on information provided by the Environment Agency and show that narrow strips of land immediately adjacent to watercourses and coastal and estuarine frontages are potentially at risk of flooding. Urban locations potentially affected by flooding within the study area include parts of Morpeth, Warkworth, Blyth, Ponteland, Hexham, Alnwick, Berwick upon Tweed, Amble, Belford, Wooler and Rothbury. However there are also numerous small settlements at risk of flooding.
- 3.11.3 The SFRA also identified sewer flooding from NWL historical sewer flooding databases. There have also been recorded instances of groundwater flooding in Spittal, near Berwick and Darras Hall in Ponteland.
- 3.11.4 The main hydrological influences in Northumberland are the rivers North, South and Main Tyne; the River Coquet; River Wansbeck; River Blyth; River Rede; River Tweed; and River Till. The SFRA for Northumberland states that Northumberland's Catchment Flood Management Plans project an increased level of flood risk in the study area over the next 25 to 100 years as a result of climate change through wetter and warmer winters and an increase in large fluvial events and extreme rainfall events. These events are likely to lead to increased surface water runoff.

Figure 3.11 Major Watercourses, Flood Zones and Flood Defences in Northumberland



- 3.11.5 The coast of Northumberland is subject to natural erosion but is not as vulnerable as other parts of England, which are losing land at a significant rate. The Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2⁸⁸, Scottish Border to River Tyne, was published in May 2009. The SMP2 “provides a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal evolution and presents a policy framework to address these risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment in a sustainable manner”. A list of issues that affect receptors in the SMP study area is shown in **Table 3.15** below.

Table 3.15 Coastal Erosion Issues Affecting Receptors in the SMP2 Area

Topic	Issue
Environment	Threat of invasive species. Loss of habitat, particularly salt marsh and rocky shore and opportunities for habitat creation. Recreational disturbance of protected habitats Inadequate management of designated sites. Coastal squeeze.
Commercial	Erosion flood risk threatening material assets
Heritage	Erosion flood risk threatening heritage asset
Hard asset	Erosion flood risk threatening development zones and material assets
Recreational	Erosion flood risk of recreational assets (e.g. beach, golf course)

Source: Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2, May 2009

- 3.11.6 The prevalence of rocky headlands and foreshores protecting softer bays means that coastal erosion is less of a challenge than elsewhere in England. Various studies are currently being undertaken by partners of the Council to provide detailed data in relation to coastal change, which the Local Plan and SA need to take full account of, for example when considering development or designating Coastal Change Management Areas.

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

- 3.11.7 Taking into account national planning policy set out in the NPPF and extant Development Plan policy, it is expected that flood risk and costal change would be managed without the Local Plan (although flood risk and the process of coastal change may increase as a result of climate change). Notwithstanding this, local planning policy would help to ensure that new development is located away from flood risk areas/coastal erosion, that any development proposals within such areas are resilient to flooding and could help to ensure that any investment in flood defence infrastructure required to accommodate development is identified and delivered in a timely manner. The Local Plan also provides the opportunity to define coastal change management areas and identify appropriate development within any such areas.
- 3.11.8 The Council’s Infrastructure Delivery Plan highlights that flood alleviation and / or coastal protection work is due to be carried out in the next 3 years (2018-21) in a number of locations throughout the County including Amble, Corbridge, Hexham, Newbiggin, Ovingham and Wooler.

⁸⁸ Available at <http://www.northeastcoastalobservatory.org.uk/data/Reports/>

Key Sustainability Issues

- The need to locate new development away from areas of flood risk, taking into account the effects of climate change;
- The need to ensure the timely provision of flood defence/management infrastructure.

3.12 Climate Change and Energy

Climate Change

- 3.12.1 In total, the emissions in Northumberland are estimated to have decreased significantly between 2005 (3.5 MtCO₂e) and 2016 (0.6 MtCO₂e)⁸⁹.
- 3.12.2 **Table 3.16** shows the per capita carbon emission figures for 2010-2016 and shows a sustained downward trend (from 8.7 tCO₂ per capita in 2010 to 1.8 tCO₂ per capita in 2016). The downward trend in emissions was the largest decrease in the country over this period and was largely due to a reduction in large industrial installations. The low per capita emissions figure overall reflects Northumberland's important role as a carbon sink due to its extensive forestry cover which means that it absorbs substantial amounts of CO₂.

Table 3.16 Estimated Per Capita Emissions of CO₂ (tCO₂/person)

Area	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Northumberland	8.7	8.4	6.7	3.0	2.2	2.0	1.8

Source: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

- 3.12.3 North East Climate Change Adaptation Study (2008)⁹⁰ highlighted the following trends in Northumberland's climate and change in sea level in the period up to 2050:

Rainfall

- Slight reduction in overall rainfall but with a change in seasonality with more rain falling in winter months – upland areas could see winter rain fall increase by up to 14%;
- Drier autumns and springs whilst lower lying and coastal areas could see up to 32% less rainfall in summer; and
- Significant increase in severe rainfall events with increased amounts of rainfall and duration.

Temperatures

- Average daily temperatures expected to increase, up to 2.1°C in summer and 1.6°C in winter. Coastal areas will be warmer with temperatures reducing progressively in land;
- Summer extreme temperatures are likely to increase by around 3°C and summer daily average temperatures expected to reach 25°C; and

⁸⁹ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (2018) Local Authority Carbon Dioxide Emissions Estimates 2016. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2016>

⁹⁰ Available at <https://www.royalhaskoningdhv.com/en-gb/united-kingdom/projects/climate-change-north-east/982>

- Heat waves are likely to increase both in duration and intensity with more events above the 28°C threshold temperature.

Frost and Snow

- Reduction in frost days and extreme winter temperatures moving closer to melt point but still below zero. Only the Cheviot Hills can expect spring temperatures below zero; and
- Major reduction in winter snowfall and number of days of snow, but this does not mean snowfall events will be any less dramatic as temperatures will still fall below zero and the increase in winter rainfall will mean that snowfall depths do not differ from at present.

Wind

- There is to be a small change in average or extreme wind speed.

Sea Level Rise

- There is an expected increase of around 0.3 metres along the Northumberland Coast; and an increase in sea surge levels of up to 0.35 metres; and
- The coast of Northumberland is subject to natural erosion but the prevalence of rocky headlands and foreshores protecting softer bays means that coastal erosion is less of a challenge than elsewhere in England.

3.12.4 The most recent UK climate change projections⁹¹ suggest that overall there is a greater chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. With respect to future UK temperatures the following is projected:

- All areas of the UK are projected to experience warming;
- Warming is greater in the summer than the winter;
- Future rise depends on the amount of greenhouse gases the world emits;
- The lowest scenario is compatible with aims to limit global warming since pre-industrial levels to below 2°C; and
- The highest scenario will likely require significant further adaption.

3.12.5 With respect to future UK precipitation the following is projected:

- Winter precipitation is expected to increase slightly;
- Summer rainfall is expected to decrease significantly, but when it rains in summer there may be more intense storms.

3.12.6 With respect to sea level rise, the following is projected:

- Sea-level rise will occur for all emission scenarios and at all locations around the UK;
- Changes in extreme water levels are mostly driven by changes in mean sea level;
- Sea level will continue to rise beyond year 2100. But the amount is very uncertain; and
- There may be changes in tidal characteristics and waves.

⁹¹ Available online at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/collaboration/ukcp>

Energy

- 3.12.7 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁹² (IDP) highlights that Northumberland's energy is provided through national and local networks of power supply and energy sources including various renewable energy schemes.
- 3.12.8 Northern Powergrid provides the local electricity distribution network and the company takes electricity supply from National Grid's transmission network and smaller generators to supply homes, businesses and other facilities in the County. Northern Gas Networks (NGN) supply gas to homes and businesses in Northumberland. During times of peak demand the gas network transports four times more energy than the electricity network. NGN transport gas through a network of underground pipes and are responsible for replacement and renewal of gas network. NGN have an ongoing 30 year programme for replacement of old metallic pipes with plastic pipes, and this is being rolled out across the County.
- 3.12.9 The IDP also notes that a number of properties are not connected to main gas network and rely on other sources of heating including oil. Liquid Petroleum Gas, bottled gas, biomass; and solar.

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

- 3.12.10 The North East Climate Change Adaptation Study was published in 2008 (and remains the most recent) and provides climate information for the North East of England from 2005-2015. This study highlighted the impact climate change could have on Northumberland in the future, the most severe of which are listed below:
- A shift in rainfall patterns with winter becoming considerably wetter whilst spring and autumn become considerably drier;
 - Significant increase in severe rainfall events that would last longer;
 - An increase in the average daily summer temperature and an increase in the likelihood and severity of heatwaves; and
 - A continued rise in sea level.
- 3.12.11 Climate change is occurring and will continue regardless of local planning policy intervention. However, national policy on climate change, extant Development Plan policy and other plans and programmes alongside Building Regulations will help to ensure that new development is located and designed to adapt to the effects of climate change and that measures are in place to mitigate climate change. Notwithstanding, without the Local Plan the Council is likely to have less control over, in particular, the design and location of new development which could exacerbate climate change impacts and mean that opportunities to adapt to and mitigate effects (for example, through reducing transport movements, tree planting and decentralised renewable energy solutions) may be missed. This could result in damage to properties, infrastructure and stress on emergency services and also have an effect on biodiversity, which could lead to ecosystems changes.
- 3.12.12 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan highlights that a range of electricity network improvements are planned to take place at locations across the County and there are a number of gas network improvement works planned. New electric vehicle charging infrastructure is planned and the following renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure is planned:

⁹² Available online at <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Infrastructure%20Studies/NCC-IDP-Part-1-July-2018-Low-Res.pdf>

- Conversion of Lynemouth Power station from Coal powered to biomass powered, which will feed up to 390MW electricity into the National Grid (due to be operational summer/autumn 2018);
- Cramlington Biomass CHP plant will produce 27.7MW electricity and heat to local businesses, which was due to be operational by the summer of 2018;
- Anaerobic digestion facility at Lynemouth which will feed 38,900 MWh of gas into the National Grid; and
- Solar parks at Blyth, Acomb, Tweedmouth and Belford.

Key Sustainability Issues

- The need to ensure that new development is adaptable to the effects of climate change;
- The need to mitigate climate change including through increased renewable energy provision.

3.13 Natural Resources and Waste

Minerals

- 3.13.1 Government policy recognises that minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and our quality of life. It promotes the general conservation of minerals whilst at the same time ensuring a sufficient supply is available to meet the country's needs. Mineral resources are not distributed evenly across the country and some areas are able to provide greater amounts of certain minerals than they actually use.
- 3.13.2 A summary of the location of Northumberland's primary mineral resources is provided within the Environmental Considerations & Mineral Resources Study (2011)⁹³ and the key resources areas are summarised in **Table 3.17** below.

Table 3.17 Key Resource Areas

Mineral	Key Resource Areas
Coal	Main Northumberland Coalfield (including the area from Amble in the north to the boundary with Tyne and Wear in the south and the Tyne/Derwent Watershed (area to the south of Prudhoe around Whittonstall and Hedley on the Hill) Outlying areas of the principal coal resource at Midgeholme, Plenmeller and Stublick
Sand and Gravel	Coquet valley Breamish, Glen and Till valleys Tyne valley, including the Derwent, North Tyne and South Tyne
Carboniferous Limestone	Great Limestone
Igneous Rock	Whin Sill

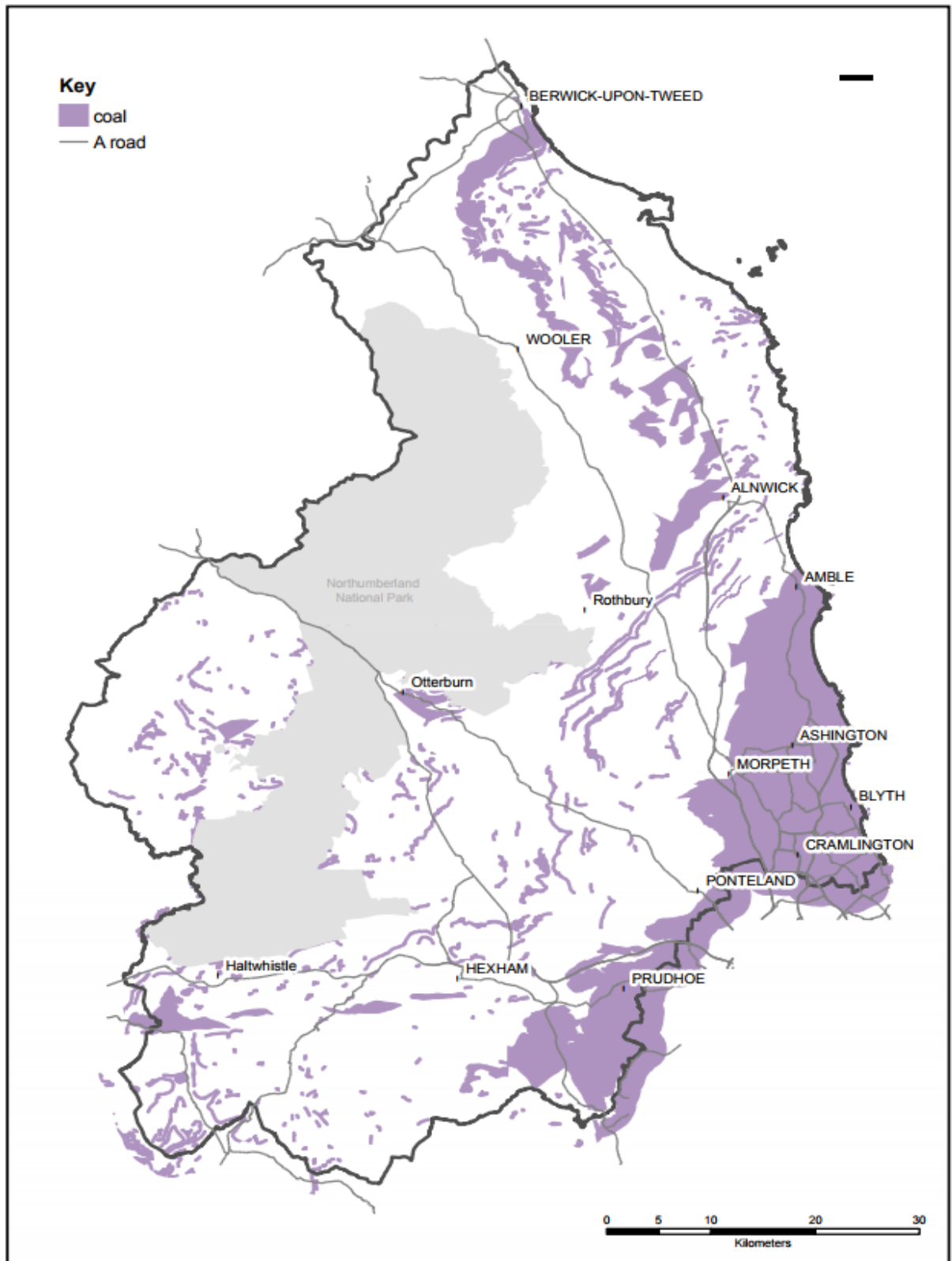
⁹³ Environmental Considerations & Mineral Resources Study (2011). Available online at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Minerals%20Waste%20Studies/2.%20ECMR%20Studies/Environmental-Considerations-Minerals-Resources-Study-2011.pdf>

3.13.3

Northumberland's coal resources cover extensive areas of the County. Much of this resource (highlighted in **Table 3.17** above) is shallow in nature and unlikely to be economically viable due to its characteristics and quality and also due to the coal being mainly located in thin and widely spaced veins. However, there are significant areas of closely spaced coal seams that are capable of supporting modern extraction and which contain coals with the characteristics that are appropriate for current markets, predominantly in the south east of Northumberland. This can be seen in **Figure 3.12** below.

Figure 3.12 Coal Resource Areas

Source: *Environmental Considerations & Mineral Resources Study (2011)*. Available online at:

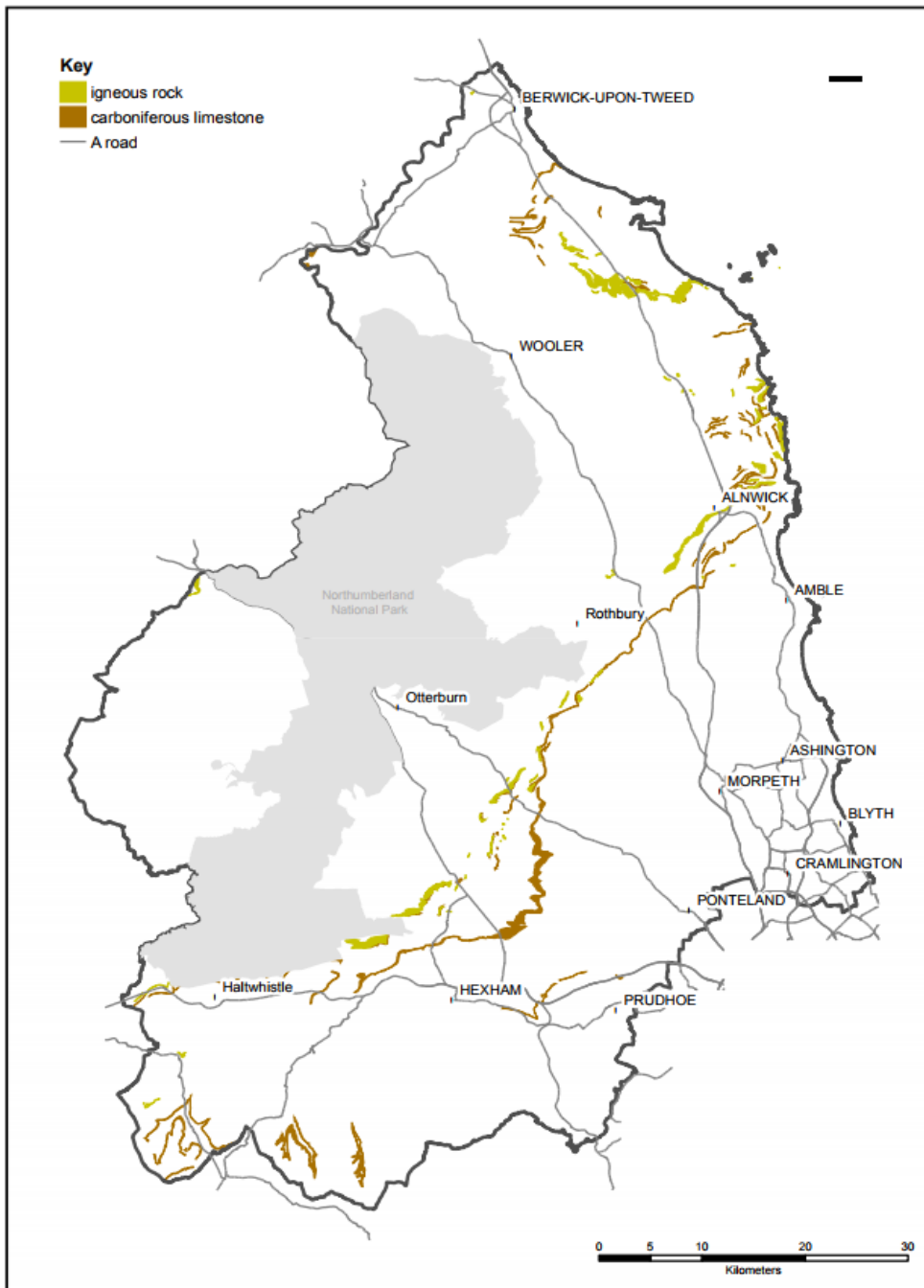


<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Minerals%20Waste%20Studies/2.%20ECMR%20Studies/Environment%20Considerations-Minerals-Resources-Study-2011.pdf>

3.13.4

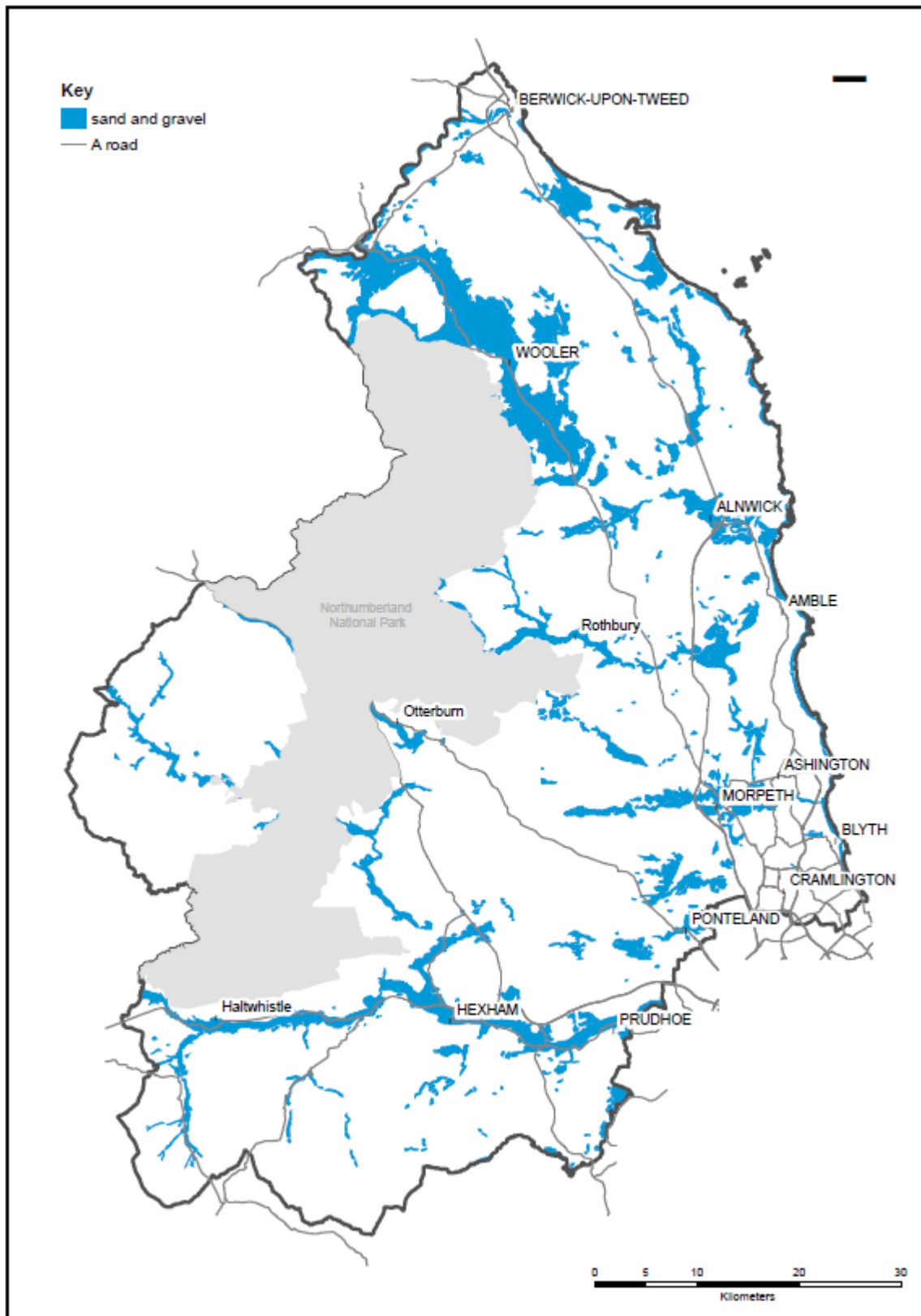
Northumberland's hard rock resources take the form of igneous rock and Carboniferous Limestone. The Whin Sill is an important resource for igneous rock – quartz dolerite known locally as 'whinstone'. The Great Limestone is the main Carboniferous Limestone resource in Northumberland and is 20 metres thick, extensive and highly consistent in its quality, making it a very workable resource. **Figure 3.13** below showcases Northumberland's igneous rock and Carboniferous Limestone locations.

Figure 3.13 Igneous Rock and Carboniferous Limestone Resource Areas



Source: *Environmental Considerations & Mineral Resources Study (2011)*. Available online at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Minerals%20Waste%20Studies/2.%20ECMR%20Studies/Environmental-Considerations-Minerals-Resources-Study-2011.pdf>

Figure 3.14 Sand and Gravel Resources in Northumberland



Source: Environmental Considerations & Mineral Resources Study (2011). Available online at:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Minerals%20Waste%20Studies/2.%20ECMR%20Studies/Environmental-Considerations-Minerals-Resources-Study-2011.pdf>

3.13.5 **Figure 3.14** above outlines the sand and gravel resources of Northumberland. The key areas where the extraction of sand and gravel is currently taking place and where there are pressures to expand are⁹⁴:

- i. Coquet Valley;
- ii. Beamish, Glen and Till Valley areas; and
- iii. Tyne Valley, including the Derwent, North Tyne and South Tyne areas.

3.13.6 Outside of the above areas, there is little pressure for the extraction of sand and gravel. At the end of 2017 the estimated sand and gravel reserves in Northumberland were 5.4 million tonnes and 81.0 million tonnes of crushed rock. The Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA) for Northumberland identified that the annual demand for sand and gravel is 420,000 tonnes. Based on this annual demand, Northumberland's current reserves with planning permission would last 12.8 years from the end of 2017. There would therefore be a shortfall in supply towards the end of the Plan period (on the basis of maintaining an adequate landbank of at least 7 years throughout the Plan period). The LAA forecasts an annual demand of 1,650,000 tonnes of crushed rock. Based on this annual demand, Northumberland's current reserves with planning permission would last for 49.1 years from the end of 2017. There would be no shortfall in demand during the Plan period, however the LAA indicates the need for some flexibility to maintain productive capacity and a geographical balance in supply.

Waste

3.13.7 Residual waste per household rose for both Northumberland and England in 2014/15 and 2015/16. In 2014/15, residual waste per household in Northumberland was 609kg, which was slightly higher than the North East figure (590kg), but significantly more than the England figure (504kg). In 2015/16 residual waste per household continued to rise with Northumberland producing 628kg and then in 2016/17, it decreased slightly to 625kg.

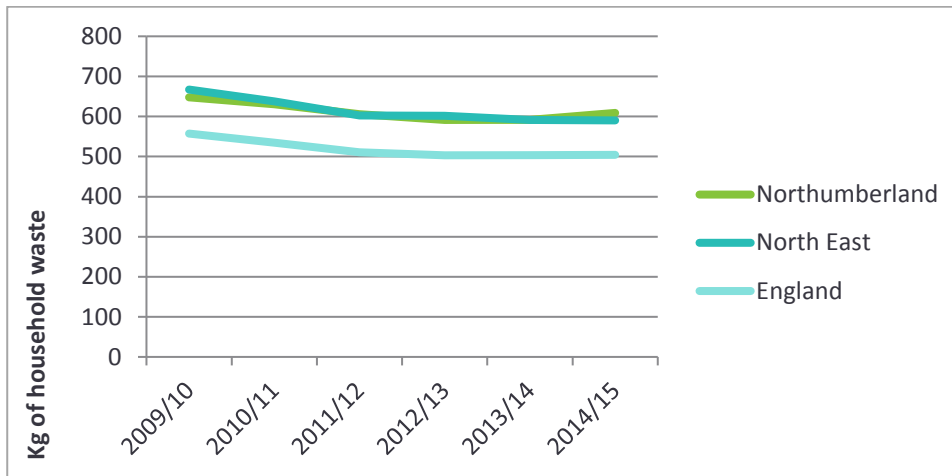
3.13.8 The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting had been increasing year-on-year. However, the year 2014/15 saw a dip in household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting, with 39.6% of Northumberland waste treated this way in comparison to 40.2% in 2013/14. This is slightly lower than the England figure (42.5%) but higher than for the North East (37.6%)⁹⁵. These trends are seen in **Figure 3.15** and **Figure 3.16** below. This downturn in the recycling rate can be seen in both 2015/16 (38.11%) and 2016/17 (37.7%) as the percentage of waste being recycled over these periods continued to decrease.

3.13.9 Traditionally higher levels of growth in economic activity have led to a greater volume of waste, although there is evidence that the amount of waste we produce as a nation 'per capita' is decreasing.

⁹⁴ *Environmental Considerations & Mineral Resources Study (2011)*. Available online at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Minerals%20Waste%20Studies/2.%20ECMR%20Studies/Environmental-Considerations-Minerals-Resources-Study-2011.pdf>

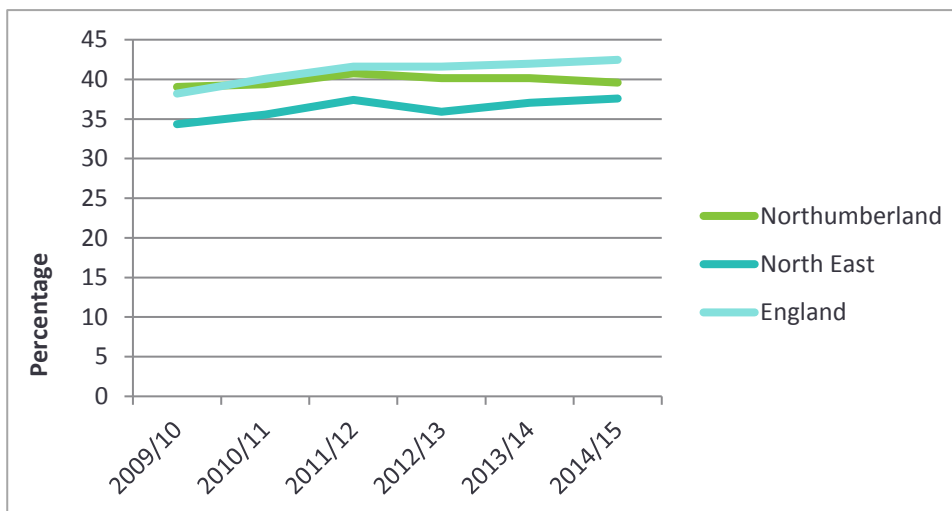
⁹⁵ DEFRA http://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/lgastandard?mod-metric=46&mod-area=E06000057&mod-group=AllInRegion_NorthEast&modify-report=Apply&mod-period=3

Figure 3.15 Residual Waste per Household 2009/10 to 2014/15



Source: ONS (2015) via Nomis

Figure 3.16 Household Waste 2009/10 to 2014/15



Source: ONS (2015) via Nomis

3.13.10 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁹⁶ (IDP) highlights that there has been significant investment in waste management over the last 10 years in Northumberland which has helped to stop a rise in household waste. The 2012 baseline Strategic Infrastructure Study identified deficiencies in provision of Civic Amenity sites at Amble, Rothbury and Bellingham. It is an aspiration of the Council to deliver upgraded site in Amble, however, the IDP notes that a search for new sites in Rothbury and Bellingham were unsuccessful.

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

3.13.11 Forecasted population growth and new development would result in an increase in the waste produced by Northumberland in the future. Many of the tools to reduce the amount of waste produced and increase reuse and recycling are outwith the land use planning system and Northumberland already has a well-established and spatially distributed network of waste management facilities with adequate capacity. The absence of a Local Plan will not unduly

⁹⁶ Available at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Infrastructure%20Studies/NCC-IDP-Part-1-July-2018-Low-Res.pdf>

influence this aspect. However, the Local Plan can facilitate improvements to this network and the delivery of new capacity in appropriate locations and that there is a framework to enable the provision of sufficient landfill capacity for waste that cannot be reused, recycled or recovered.

- 3.13.12 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) states that in terms of meeting future demands arising from development planned through the Local Plan, there are no constraints to provision as the service is able to accommodate the additional demands from development.
- 3.13.13 In 2022 new recycling targets will be set by EU legislation which require 50% of household waste to be recycled. The IDP highlights this requirement will pose new challenges for service delivery and will also influence the amount of waste which can be sent for incineration. Increases in organic waste will influence the potential future requirement for Anaerobic Digesters which is a challenge and significant delivery cost.
- 3.13.14 New development (both within Northumberland and nationally) may place pressure on local mineral resources to support construction and for electricity generation. The absence of a Local Plan may not halt the delivery of new mineral reserves. However, without local policy relating to the quantum, type and location of new development, the extent to which new development meets the needs of Northumberland's communities and businesses (and also the needs of the North East and other parts of the country) would be more uncertain. The lack of local planning policy could result in Northumberland not fulfilling its contribution to the need for aggregate minerals established in the Local Aggregates Assessment.

Key Sustainability Issues

- The need to minimise waste arising and encourage reuse and recycling;
- The need to promote the efficient use of mineral resources to ensure that there is a sufficient supply to provide for the infrastructure, buildings and energy that the country needs whilst making the best use of them to secure their long term conservation; and
- The need to ensure that minerals resources are safeguarded from sterilisation by other developments.

3.14 Built and Natural Heritage

- 3.14.1 There is a wealth of built and cultural heritage in Northumberland. There are currently 5,562 listed buildings within Northumberland, of which 169 are Grade 1, 265 are Grade II* and 5,128 are Grade II. There are 975 Scheduled Monuments in Northumberland, which is over 65% of the total for the North East. Northumberland also has 18 Registered Parks and Gardens, 4 Battlefields and 69 Conservation Areas⁹⁷.
- 3.14.2 Northumberland also includes Hadrian's Wall, a World Heritage Site. A popular tourist attraction, it runs through Northumberland, stretching from Newcastle upon Tyne to Bowness and extends down the Cumbrian coast as far as Ravenglass.
- 3.14.3 Hadrian's Wall, due to its classification as a World Heritage Site, requires a management plan. The current Hadrian's Wall Management Plan⁹⁸ runs from 2015-2019. Continued management and protection will enable its long term conservation.

⁹⁷ Historic England (2015).

⁹⁸ Available online at <http://hadrianswallcountry.co.uk/hadrians-wall-management-plan>

3.14.4 In Northumberland as a whole (including the National Park), there were 145 heritage assets identified as 'at risk⁹⁹' by Historic England' in 2017. The at risk heritage assets number of 145 can be broken down into:

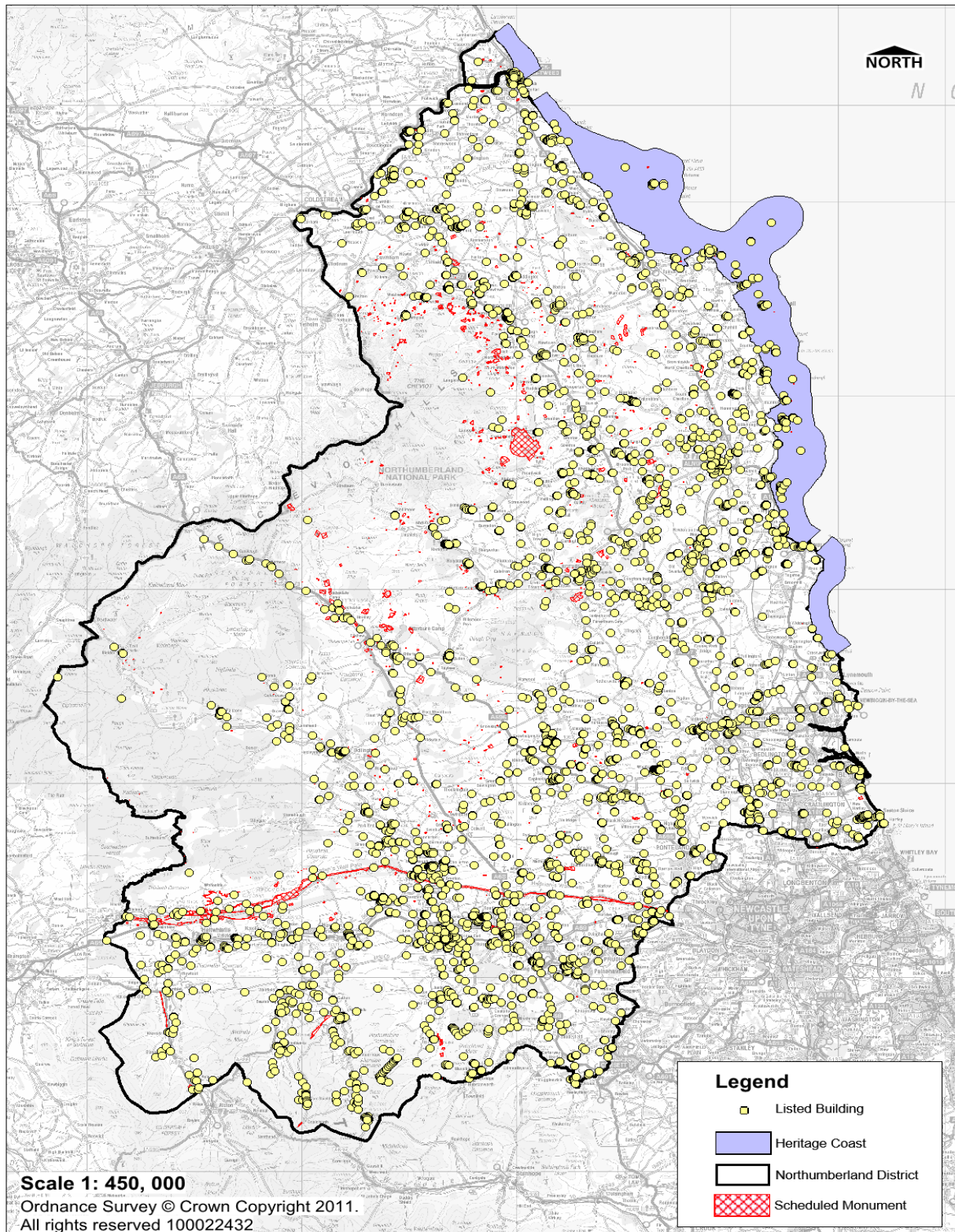
- Three conservation areas;
- Six Listed Buildings Grade I;
- Three Listed Buildings Grade II;
- 16 Listed Buildings Grade II*;
- Two Registered Parks and Gardens Grade II*; and
- 115 Scheduled Monuments.

3.14.5 The condition of these assets at risk varies with some having plans in place for repair, or currently undergoing repair and others in slow decay with no solution agreed for repairing. For example General Lamberts House in Alnwick is in poor condition and immediate risk of further decay, the Mausoleum east of Seaton Delaval hall is in slow decay with no solution agreed, and Cornhill Castle is in general unsatisfactory condition with major localised problems.

3.14.6 As illustrated on **Figure 3.17** below, statutory Listed Buildings are found throughout the County, with concentrations in the main towns and smaller settlements. These include a range of historic buildings and structures such as Norman Castles, country houses, fortified farmhouses, and buildings associated with the County's diverse social, economic and cultural legacy.

⁹⁹ Historic England 'At Risk' register available online at <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/>

Figure 3.17 Nationally Designated Heritage Assets



3.14.7 **Table 3.18** provides a summary of Statutory Natural and Heritage Designations in Northumberland.

Table 3.18 Statutory Natural and Heritage Designations

International	National	Local
Scheduled Monuments and other listed assets that form part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Hadrian's Wall, World Heritage Site	18 Registered Parks and Gardens	69 Conservation Areas
	Nearly 1,000 Scheduled Monuments and more than 5,500 Grade I, II* and II Listed Buildings	

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

- 3.14.8 It is reasonable to assume that the majority of Northumberland's designated heritage assets would be protected without the Local Plan (since works to them often (but not always) require consent). However, elements which contribute to their significance could be harmed through inappropriate development in their vicinity. Opportunities to enhance assets may also be missed. Further, other non-designated elements which contribute to the character of the area could be harmed without an up-to-date policy framework. Given the considerable number of heritage assets located within Northumberland, both designated and non-designated, the likelihood for new development to causing harm to these assets setting is increased.
- 3.14.9 Notwithstanding, it is recognised that national planning policy set out in the NPPF and extant Development Plan policy and associated guidance would together provide some level of protection in this regard.

Key Sustainability Issues

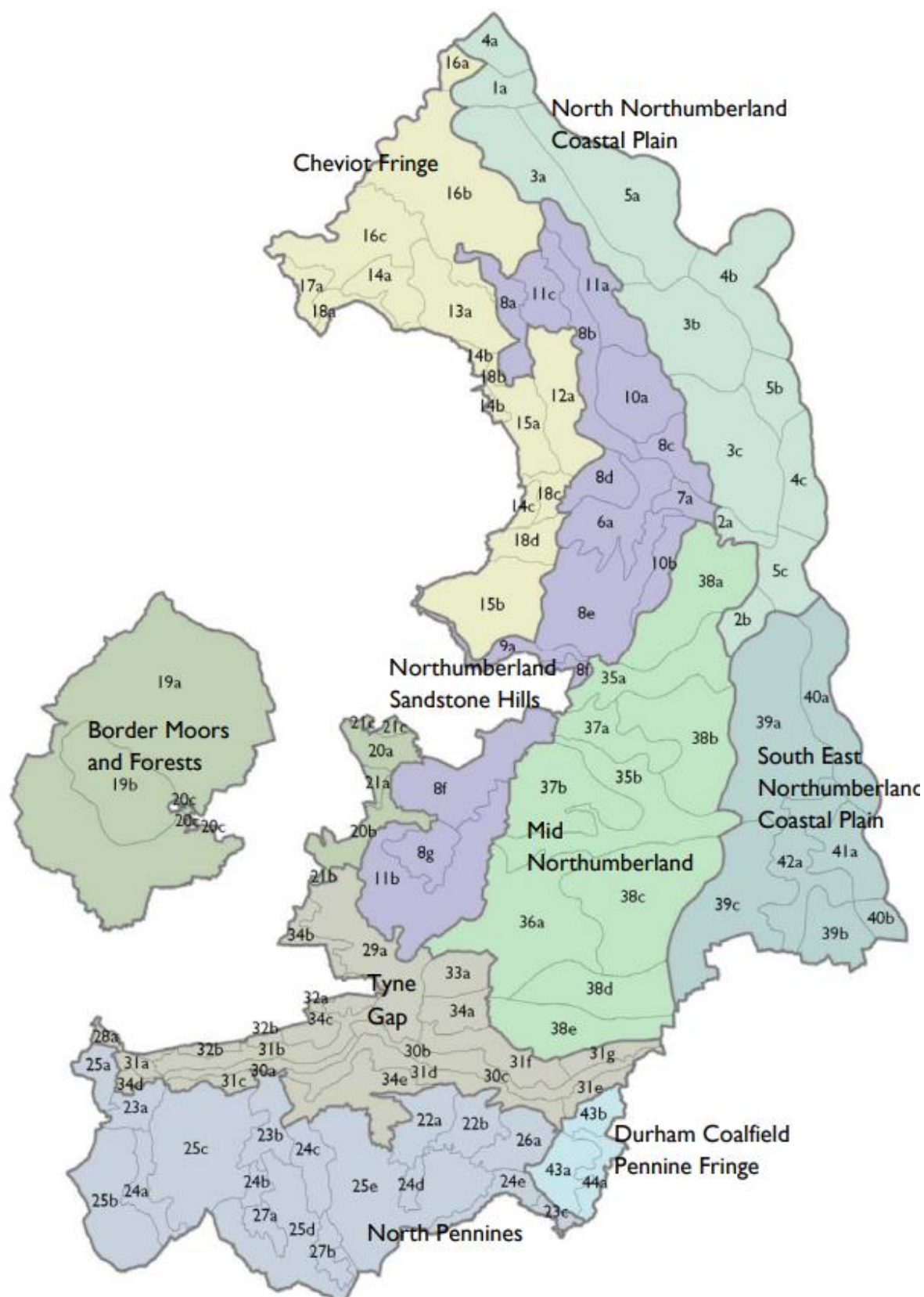
- The need to protect and enhance Northumberland's cultural heritage assets and their settings;
- The need to recognise the significance of heritage assets and the contribution made by their setting to the significance;
- The need to recognise the value of non-designated heritage assets and protect these where possible;
- The need to tackle heritage at risk; and
- The need to recognise the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of landscapes and townscapes.

3.15 Landscape Character

- 3.15.1 Northumberland has a rich and varied landscape character, ranging from the tranquil North Pennines, Cheviots and Border Fringes, to extensive low-lying coastal plains made up of sandy beaches and low headlands. Occasional rocky outcrops and islands in the North East provide stunning views, and this is recognised in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast designations. An in depth Landscape Character Assessment (Part A) has been completed locally¹⁰⁰ and can be seen in **Figure 3.18** below.

¹⁰⁰ Northumberland County Council, Landscape Character Assessment (Part A) (August, 2010).

Figure 3.18 Local Landscape Character Areas



Source: Northumberland County Council, Landscape Character Assessment (Part A) (August, 2010)

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

- 3.15.2 Alongside this character assessment, a 'Part B' document was produced that sets out key high level principles for an approach to landscape that will assist in maintaining the key qualities of the Northumberland landscape and associated seascapes.
- 3.15.3 Based on the landscape descriptions, and the ongoing processes identified within the study area, a list of likely pressures for change was drawn up for each Landscape Character Type. These are referred to as 'forces for change', in the document and cover:
- "Changes in farmland, woodland, forestry and upland management practices;
 - Development pressures for housing, industry, and other types; and
 - Environmental processes such as erosion and climate change".
- 3.15.4 The three guiding principles below summarise the broad recommendations for distinct landscape areas in the County (reproduced from Box 2.1 in the LCA [Part B]).

Protect

- 3.15.5 The landscapes which have been identified for protection are the most valued landscapes in the County. They include the coastal landscapes and seascapes which comprise the Northumberland Coast AONB, the foothills which form the setting to the Cheviots, and the dales of the North Pennines AONB, as well as other sensitive river valley landscapes. Protection does not imply preservation, but rather conservation of key landscape qualities. It is recognised that these landscapes are not static, but evolving. They will undergo change in future, but change within these landscapes requires more careful management.

Manage

- 3.15.6 The landscapes which have been identified for management are agricultural and upland areas, and reflect the working rural landscapes of Northumberland. While they are often highly valued at a local level, these landscapes generally have a greater ability to absorb change, without significant detriment to their innate character. However, there remains a need to ensure that the character of these landscapes is maintained, and that changes are sympathetic and sustainable. The key qualities of these landscapes may still require a degree of protection, although there is greater scope for planning some change.

Plan

- 3.15.7 Planning has been identified as the guiding principle for landscapes in the south-east of the County, the forested uplands, and areas of intensive arable farming or former mineral extraction. These landscapes have already been heavily modified by the actions of people, and positive action is required to restore or enhance these areas. Again, there needs to be recognition of the underlying key qualities of the landscape, albeit that these may have been compromised in the past. Not all change will be beneficial, and management is required to ensure that change is sustainable, and results in a strengthening of landscape character.

Designated Landscapes

- 3.15.8 Northumberland has a high conservation potential and the land management reflects this. There are management plans in place for the Northumberland National Park and the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), the North Pennines and the Northumberland Coast. Parts of the Northumberland Coast have been defined as a Heritage Coast. The National Park, AONBs and Heritage Coast also contain major heritage assets.

Northumberland National Park

- 3.15.9 National Parks are designated by Natural England under the provisions of The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, and have two statutory purposes:
- To conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and
 - To promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of special qualities.
- 3.15.10 The Northumberland National Park was designated in 1956 and has a population of approximately 2,000 people within its 1,030 square kilometres boundaries running from Hadrian's Wall in the south to the Cheviots in the north. The Northumberland National Park Authority has its own statutory functions including as local planning authority, which is separate from that of Northumberland County Council. The National Park, together with the Kielder Forest Area, is designated as the Northumberland Dark Sky Park.

North Pennines AONB

- 3.15.11 The North Pennines was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1988 and covers an area of 1,983 square kilometres. The North Pennines AONB covers most of the southern area of the former district of Tynedale and stretches through Durham and Cumbria to the border with North Yorkshire.
- 3.15.12 The landscape of the North Pennines contains many habitats of exceptional conservation value, including blanket bog, upland heath, species-rich hay meadows, oak and ash woodlands, juniper scrub, flushes and springs and unimproved and heavy-metal rich grasslands. Internationally important numbers of birds, including 10,000 pairs of breeding waders and 80% of England's black grouse, breed and feed on the open moors and adjacent grasslands.
- 3.15.13 The AONB includes parts of the Pennine Dales Environmentally Sensitive Area. The North Pennines AONB is also a UNESCO Global Geopark. The North Pennines was once an important area for lead mining and the ruined traces of abandoned lead mines are now acknowledged as an intrinsic part of the landscape and heritage of the area.

Northumberland Coast AONB

- 3.15.14 Established in 1958, the Northumberland Coast AONB covers a narrow coastal strip stretching from Spittal in the North to the Coquet Estuary in the south, an area of 135 square kilometres. Open miles of beach are backed by extensive sand dunes. Lindisfarne Island is characterised by the intertidal mudflats and further south, the rock of the Farne Islands meets the North Sea.
- 3.15.15 Occasionally, the coastline is broken by the Whin Sill; here ancient basalt meets the sea in low headlands and rocky coves, where landmarks such as Bamburgh and Dunstanburgh Castles and shelter for working harbours such as Craster can be found.
- 3.15.16 The Coast AONB contains designations of National Nature Reserve, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area (Birds) and Ramsar Site. The dunes, marshes and mud-flats of the Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve are one of the best sites in Europe for waders and waterfowl and offshore, the Farne Islands are a protected seabird sanctuary. The AONB's dune systems are a particularly fine example of this fragile habitat.

Heritage Coast

- 3.15.17 Heritage Coasts are areas of largely undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors. Northumberland's Heritage Coast stretches from Druridge Bay to the Scottish Borders.

Likely Evolution of Baseline Without the Local Plan

- 3.15.18 There are a variety of Landscape Character types that exist across Northumberland. New development is likely to increase the pressure on the characteristics of the landscape and the Green Belt. Whilst national planning policy set out in the NPPF and existing Development Plan policy would continue to offer some protection and guidance without a Local Plan, there is the potential that development could be inappropriately sited and designed. Furthermore, without an updated Local Plan that can assess the best locations for sites, opportunities for new development to enhance and support the local Landscape Character through, for example, the provision of green infrastructure or the adoption of high quality design standards which reflects local character, may be lost.

Key Sustainability Issues

- The need to conserve and enhance Northumberland's landscape character including the character of its villages and surrounding countryside;
- The need to appropriately manage development within the Green Belt;
- The need to promote high quality design that respects local character;
- The need to maximise opportunities associated with new development to enhance townscape character and the quality of urban environments;
- The need to have regard to the special qualities of the National Park and AONBs; and
- The need to reflect the aims and objectives of the North Pennines AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 and Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan 2014-2019.

3.16 Key Sustainability Issues

- 3.16.1 From the analysis of the baseline presented in the preceding sections, a number of key sustainability issues affecting the County have been identified. These issues are summarised in **Table 3.19**.

Table 3.19 Key Sustainability Issues

Topic	Key Sustainability Issues
Community, Health, Wellbeing and Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of Northumberland's population. • The need to promote a healthy lifestyle and increase physical activity to address obesity levels in adults and children. • The need to address health inequalities between the rural and urban populations of Northumberland. • The need to tackle deprivation, particularly in those areas that are most deprived. • The need to protect, conserve and enhance the open spaces of Northumberland and create the provision for new open spaces. • The need to address areas of deficit with sports and recreation facilities. • The need to support high quality design that creates safe and secure communities. • The need to safeguard existing health care facilities and services and ensure the timely delivery of new facilities and services to meet needs arising from new development and an ageing population. • The need to maintain and enhance the vitality of the County's town centres and larger villages. • The need to address relative isolation/remoteness of some communities.

Topic	Key Sustainability Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to reflect the aims and objectives of Achieving Health and Wellbeing in Northumberland 2014.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to create sustainable places where people want to live and relax. The need to enable housing growth, meeting objectively assessed housing needs and planning for a mix of accommodation to suit all household types, especially housing for the older residents of Northumberland. The need to improve the quality of Northumberland's existing and future housing stock. The need to ensure a flexible supply of land for residential development, especially in the rural parts of Northumberland. The need to increase the level of affordable housing being built. The need to reflect the aims and objectives of the Northumberland Housing Strategy, 2013-2018 and Northumberland Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2021. The need to address impacts on housing availability and affordability associated with second homes ownership.
Economy and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the need to create sustainable places where people want to work. The need to deliver a range of employment sites to support economic growth and diversify the local economy in a sustainable manner that protects the environment whilst allowing social and economic progress. The need to ensure a flexible supply of land for employment development. The need to tackle pockets of high unemployment and low education attainment. The need to increase wage growth and disposable income across the County. The need to reflect the aims and objectives of the Northumberland Economic Strategy 2015-2020.
Transport and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain a congestion free road system. The need to ensure timely investment in transport infrastructure and services. The need to enhance the connectivity of the more rural settlements to an efficient and sustainable transport system which provides access to jobs and services. The need to encourage a modal shift away from car usage to more sustainable forms of transportation. The need to ensure new developments are accessible to community facilities and jobs and can be accessed by a number of different transport methods. The need to reduce out commuting. The need to address areas with slow internet speeds.
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to conserve and enhance biodiversity including sites designated for their nature conservation value. The need to protect the conservation objectives of all designated sites. The need to safeguard existing green infrastructure assets. The need to enhance the green infrastructure network, addressing deficiencies and gaps, improving accessibility for all users and encouraging multiple uses where appropriate. The need to reverse the decline in Ancient Woodland and planted ancient woodland sites quality and stop their continued destruction. The need to continue to improve the condition of nationally and internationally designated nature conservation sites) to ensure more are assessed as being in a 'favourable' condition.
Geology, Soils and Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to encourage development on previously developed land (PDL). The need to make best use of existing buildings and infrastructure. The need to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to protect and enhance the quality of water sources in the Northumberland Area. The need to promote the efficient use of water resources.

Topic	Key Sustainability Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to monitor water services infrastructure to ensure it can meet demand arising from new development and population increases. The need to reflect the aims and objectives of the Northumberland River Basin Management Plan (2015).
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to minimise the emissions of pollutants into the air. The need to continue to ensure no area needs an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
Flood Risk and Coastal Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to locate new development away from areas of flood risk, taking into account the effects of climate change. The need to ensure the timely provision of flood defence/management infrastructure.
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to ensure that new development is adaptable to the effects of climate change. The need to increase woodland and tree cover to help mitigate and adapt to climate change. The need to mitigate climate change including through increased renewable energy provision.
Natural Resources and Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to minimise waste arisings and encourage reuse and recycling. The need to promote the efficient use of mineral resources to ensure that there is a sufficient supply to provide for the infrastructure, buildings and energy that the country needs whilst making the best use of them to secure their long term conservation. The need to ensure that minerals resources are safeguarded from sterilisation by other developments.
Built and Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to protect and enhance Northumberland's cultural heritage assets and their settings. The need to recognise the significance of heritage assets and the contribution made by their setting to the significance. The need to recognise the value of non-designated heritage assets and protect these where possible. The need to tackle heritage at risk. The need to recognise the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of landscapes and townscapes.
Landscape Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to conserve and enhance Northumberland's landscape character including the character of its villages and surrounding countryside. The need to appropriately manage development within the Green Belt. The need to promote high quality design that respects local character. The need to maximise opportunities associated with new development to enhance townscape character and the quality of urban environments. The need to have regard to the special qualities of the National Park and AONBs. The need to reflect the aims and objectives of the North Pennines AONB Management Plan, 2014-2019 and Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan 2014-2019.

4. SA Approach

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section describes the approach to the SA. In particular, it sets out the appraisal framework (the SA Framework) and how this has been used to appraise the key components of the Draft Local Plan. It also documents the difficulties encountered during the appraisal process including key uncertainties and assumptions.

4.2 SA Framework

- 4.2.1 Establishing appropriate SA objectives and guide questions is central to appraising the sustainability effects of the Local Plan. Broadly, the SA objectives define the long term aspirations for the County with regard to social, economic and environmental considerations and it is against these objectives that the performance of Local Plan proposals will be appraised.
- 4.2.2 **Table 4.1** presents the SA Framework including SA objectives and associated guide questions to be used in the appraisal of the Draft Local Plan. The SA objectives and guide questions reflect the key messages arising from the review of plans and programmes (**Section 2**) and the key sustainability issues identified through the analysis of the County's socio-economic and environmental baseline conditions (**Section 3**). The SEA Directive topic(s) to which each of the SA objectives relates is included in the third column. A draft SA Framework was included in the Scoping Report which was subject to scoping consultation with comments received resulting to amendments, with the final version presented in **Table 4.1** below.

Table 4.1 Sustainability Appraisal Framework

SA Objectives	Guide Questions	SEA Directive Topic(s)
1. To improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.	<p>Will it encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities?</p> <p>Will residents' quality of life be adversely affected?</p> <p>Will it help in tackling rising obesity levels?</p> <p>Will it increase regular participation in sports/exercise?</p> <p>Will it maintain and enhance healthcare facilities and services?</p> <p>Will it provide for or improve access to high quality, accessible healthcare facilities?</p> <p>Will it help to provide for and support the ageing population of Northumberland?</p> <p>Will it maintain / improve access to open space, recreational and leisure facilities?</p> <p>Will it help to reduce pollution (noise, emissions, light)?</p>	Population and Human Health.

SA Objectives	Guide Questions	SEA Directive Topic(s)
2. To improve the quality, range and accessibility of community services and facilities.	<p>Will it improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including healthcare, education, retail and leisure?</p> <p>Will it promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities?</p> <p>Will it promote the vitality and viability of town centres?</p> <p>Will it encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?</p> <p>Will it maintain and enhance rural facilities?</p> <p>Will it decrease the amount of traffic using the road system?</p> <p>Will it reduce adverse impacts of transportation on communities and the environment?</p>	Population and Human Health.
3. To deliver safer communities.	<p>Will it promote design of buildings and spaces to reduce crime and the fear of crime?</p> <p>Will it help reduce incidence of anti-social behavior and substance misuse?</p> <p>Will it encourage social inclusion?</p> <p>Will it contribute towards road safety for all users?</p>	Population and Human Health
4. To ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home.	<p>Will it provide an adequate supply of affordable housing?</p> <p>Will it support the provision of a range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of all part of the community?</p> <p>Will it ensure a flexible supply of land for residential development, especially in the rural parts of Northumberland?</p> <p>Will it ensure that appropriate use is made of the existing housing stock?</p> <p>Will it promote of sustainable building techniques including innovative building materials and construction methods?</p> <p>Will it provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?</p> <p>Will it promote improvements to the existing housing stock?</p> <p>Will it help to ensure the provision of good quality, well designed homes?</p>	Population and human health.
5. To strengthen and sustain a resilient local economy which offers local employment opportunities.	<p>Will it help provide good quality, well paid employment opportunities that meet the needs of local people?</p> <p>Will it maximise opportunities for all members of society?</p> <p>Will it tackle the causes of poverty and deprivation?</p> <p>Will it protect and enhance the vitality and viability of existing employment areas?</p> <p>Will it provide employment land in areas that are easily accessible by public transport?</p> <p>Will it direct appropriate retail, leisure and/or employment opportunities to town centre locations to aid urban regeneration?</p> <p>Will it support the rural economy and farm diversification?</p> <p>Will it recognise the importance of the environment to the local economy?</p> <p>Will it encourage or promote tourism?</p> <p>Will it encourage development of a low-carbon economy in Northumberland?</p> <p>Will it address the lack of working age population in the County?</p>	Population.

SA Objectives	Guide Questions	SEA Directive Topic(s)
6. To deliver accessible education and training opportunities.	<p>Will it provide, support and improve access to high quality educational facilities?</p> <p>Will it improve the skills and qualifications throughout the working age population?</p> <p>Will it help to provide a supply of skilled labour to match the needs of local businesses?</p> <p>Will it reduce inequalities in skills across Northumberland?</p> <p>Will it support community enterprises and the voluntary sector?</p> <p>Will it support the creation of flexible jobs to meet the changing needs of the population?</p>	Population.
7. To reduce the need for travel, promote more sustainable modes of transport and align investment in infrastructure with growth.	<p>Will it reduce the need to travel and reliance on the private car?</p> <p>Will it increase the range, availability and use of sustainable travel choices i.e. public transport, walking, cycling?</p> <p>Will it promote car-share schemes and/or working from home?</p> <p>Will it reduce traffic volumes?</p> <p>Will it help to reduce out-commuting?</p> <p>Will it support investment in transport infrastructure?</p>	Population
8. To conserve and enhance Northumberland's biodiversity and geodiversity.	<p>Will it conserve and enhance internationally, nationally and locally nature conservation designated sites and areas of ancient woodland and protected species?</p> <p>Will it meet the conservation objectives of all designated sites?</p> <p>Will it help to improve the quality of SSSI to help ensure more are in favourable condition?</p> <p>Will it maintain and enhance woodland cover and management?</p> <p>Will it avoid habitat fragmentation and strengthen ecological framework?</p> <p>Will it ensure all new developments protect and enhance local biodiversity?</p> <p>Will it contribute to the achievement of objectives and targets within the Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan?</p> <p>Will it incorporate a network of multifunctional Green Infrastructure within new developments, where appropriate?</p> <p>Will it result in a net gain for the natural environment with each new development?</p> <p>Will it provide opportunities for people to access the natural environment?</p>	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
9. To ensure the prudent use and supply of natural resources.	<p>Will it minimise the loss of soils to development?</p> <p>Will it maintain and enhance soil quality and functioning?</p> <p>Will it ensure that mineral resources are not sterilised unnecessarily?</p> <p>Will it provide an adequate supply of minerals to meet society's needs?</p>	Material Assets and soils.
10. To encourage the efficient use of land.	<p>Will it promote the use of previously developed land (PDL) and minimise the loss of greenfield land?</p> <p>Will it avoid the loss of agricultural land including best and most versatile land?</p> <p>Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land?</p> <p>Will it encourage the reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure?</p> <p>Will it prevent land contamination and facilitate remediation of contaminated sites?</p>	Material Assets and soils.

SA Objectives	Guide Questions	SEA Directive Topic(s)
11. To protect and enhance the quality of Northumberland's river, transitional and coastal and ground and surface water bodies.	<p>Will it maintain and where possible enhancing the flow, quality and quantity of rivers, ground and surface water bodies and coastal waters?</p> <p>Will it encourage sustainable and efficient management of water resources?</p> <p>Will it ensure that essential water infrastructure is co-ordinated with all new development?</p> <p>Will it contribute positively to achieving objectives set for the Northumbria and Tweed/ Solway River Basin Management Plans as part of delivery of the Water Framework Directive?</p> <p>Will it encourage sustainable practices in aquatic farming, fishing and other businesses?</p> <p>Will it contribute positively to achieving the aims of the integrated Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan and use an ecosystem approach to coastal and marine management?</p>	Water, biodiversity, fauna and flora.
12. To improve air quality.	<p>Will it maintain and improve air quality?</p> <p>Will it mitigate the impacts on air quality from road transport?</p> <p>Will it discourage or mitigate against uses that generate NO2 or other particulates?</p>	Air and human health.
13. To reduce and or avoid flood risk to people and property.	<p>Will it help to minimise the risk of flooding to people and property in new and existing developments?</p> <p>Will it help to minimise the risk of minewater flooding?</p> <p>Will it protect and enhance the natural function of floodplains</p> <p>Will it promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) in appropriate circumstances?</p> <p>Will it take into account predicted future impacts of climate change, including water scarcity and flooding events?</p> <p>Will it discourage development in areas at risk from flooding?</p> <p>Will it ensure that new development does not give rise to flood risk elsewhere?</p>	Population, water and climatic factors
14. To minimise greenhouse gases and ensure resilience to the effects of climate change through effective mitigation and adaptation	<p>Will it reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change e.g. flooding, disruption during extreme weather etc?</p> <p>Will it reduce vulnerability of the economy to climate change and harness any opportunities that may arise?</p> <p>Will it support low carbon and renewable energy and sustainable design?</p> <p>Will it ensure that impacts and opportunities of climate change on natural habitats and species are full considered and incorporated in spatial planning decisions?</p> <p>Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption or providing energy from waste?</p> <p>Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources?</p> <p>Will it promote energy efficiency in buildings and new development?</p> <p>Will it reduce contributions to climate change through sustainable building practices?</p> <p>Will it contribute to reducing Northumberland's carbon footprint?</p>	Climatic Factors

SA Objectives	Guide Questions	SEA Directive Topic(s)
15. To reduce the amount of waste that is produced and increase the proportion that is reused, recycled and composted.	<p>Will it lead to reduced consumption of materials and resources?</p> <p>Will it reduce waste arisings and increase waste reuse, recycling and recovery?</p> <p>Will it reduce hazardous waste?</p> <p>Will it reduce waste in the construction industry?</p> <p>Will it provide a framework in which businesses, communities and individuals take more responsibility for their own waste?</p> <p>Will it ensure the design and layout of new development supports sustainable waste management?</p> <p>Will it provide a suitable range of facilities throughout the County to assist in increasing rates of recycling and composting?</p>	Material Assets
16. To conserve and enhance Northumberland's cultural heritage and diversity.	<p>Will it conserve and where appropriate enhance sites, features and areas of historical, archaeological or cultural value in both urban and rural areas including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and Historic Parks and Gardens?</p> <p>Will it recognise the significance of heritage assets and their settings and the contribution of the setting to the significance?</p> <p>Will it ensure appropriate archaeological or building assessments are undertaken prior to development?</p> <p>Will it promote sensitive re-use of historical assets and buildings of local historic interest, where the opportunity arises?</p> <p>Will it improve and broaden access to, and understanding of, local heritage and historic sites?</p> <p>Will it maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements?</p>	Cultural including and Heritage Heritage Architectural Archaeological
17. To conserve and enhance the quality, distinctiveness and diversity of Northumberland's rural and urban landscapes.	<p>Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land?</p> <p>Will it conserve and enhance the County's townscapes, seascapes and landscape character?</p> <p>Will it protect and enhance natural landscapes within the urban area, including recreational open space and strategic green corridors?</p> <p>Will it help to deliver a comprehensive network of multifunctional Green Infrastructure, addressing deficiencies and gaps and providing Green Infrastructure with new development where appropriate?</p> <p>Will it conserve and enhance areas with landscape designations and take account of their management objectives?</p> <p>Will it protect the strategic function of the Green Belt?</p> <p>Will it maintain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements?</p> <p>Will it improve access to the countryside for recreation?</p> <p>Will it promote high quality design in context with its urban and rural landscape?</p>	Landscape.

4.2.3 **Table 4.2** shows the extent to which the SA objectives encompass the range of issues identified in the SEA Directive.

Table 4.2 Coverage of the SEA Directive Topics by the SA Objectives

Sea Directive Topic	SA Objective(s)
Biodiversity	8 and 11
Population *	1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and 13.

Sea Directive Topic	SA Objective(s)
Human Health	1,2,3,4 and 12.
Fauna	8 and 11.
Flora	8 and 11.
Soil	9 and 10.
Water	11 and 13.
Air	12
Climatic Factors	13
Material Assets*	15
Cultural Heritage including Architectural and Archaeological Heritage	16
Landscape	17

4.3 Methodology

- 4.3.1 Based on the contents of the Draft Local Plan detailed in **Section 1.3**, the SA Framework has been used to appraise the following key components of the document:
- Local Plan Spatial Vision and Objectives;
 - The quantum of growth to be provided over the plan period (development requirements) and distribution of that growth (Spatial Strategy);
 - Site allocations to deliver the development requirements (including reasonable alternatives); and
 - Local Plan policies.
- 4.3.2 The approach to the appraisal of each of the elements listed above is set out in the sections that follow.

Vision and Objectives

- 4.3.3 It is important that the Vision and Objectives of the Draft Local Plan are aligned with the SA objectives. The Vision and Objectives contained in the Draft Local Plan (see **Section 1.3**) have therefore been appraised for their compatibility with the objectives that comprise the SA Framework to help establish whether the proposed general approach to the Draft Local Plan is in accordance with the principles of sustainability. A compatibility matrix has been used to record the appraisal, as shown in **Table 4.3** below.

Table 4.3 Compatibility Matrix

SA Objective	Local Plan Objective			
	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4
1. To ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home.	0	0	+	?
2. To improve the quality, range and accessibility of community services and facilities.	+	-	+	+
3. Etc...	+	0	+	?

Key

+	Compatible	?	Uncertain
0	Neutral	-	Incompatible

Development Requirements and Spatial Strategy

4.3.4 The development requirements and spatial strategy have been appraised against each of the SA objectives that comprise the SA Framework using an appraisal matrix. The matrix includes:

- The SA objectives;
- A score indicating the nature of the effect for each option on each SA objective;
- A commentary on significant effects (including consideration of the cumulative, synergistic and indirect effects as well as the geography, duration, temporary/permanence and likelihood of any effects) and on any assumptions or uncertainties; and
- Recommendations, including any mitigation or enhancements measures.

4.3.5 The format of the matrix that has been used in the appraisal is shown in **Table 4.4**. A qualitative scoring system has been adopted which is set out in **Table 4.5** and to guide the appraisal, specific definitions have been developed for what constitutes a significant effect, a minor effect or a neutral effect for each of the 17 SA objectives; these can be found in **Appendix D** (which is in a separate document which accompanies this report).

Table 4.4 Appraisal Matrix

SA Objective	Guide Questions	Score	Commentary
16. Cultural Heritage: To conserve and enhance Northumberland's cultural heritage and diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it help to conserve and enhance existing features of the historic environment and their settings, including archaeological assets? Will it tackle heritage assets identified as being 'at risk'? Etc. 	-	<p><u>Likely Significant Effects</u></p> <p>A description of the likely significant effects of the preferred option on the SA objective has been provided here, drawing on baseline information as appropriate.</p> <p><u>Mitigation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation and enhancement measures are outlined here. <p><u>Assumptions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any assumptions made in undertaking the appraisal are listed here. <p><u>Uncertainties</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any uncertainties encountered during the appraisal are listed here.

Table 4.5 Scoring System

Score	Description	Symbol
Significant Positive Effect	The proposed option/policy contributes significantly to the achievement of the objective.	++
Minor Positive Effect	The proposed option/policy contributes to the achievement of the objective but not significantly.	+
Neutral	The proposed option/policy does not have any effect on the achievement of the objective	0
Minor Negative Effect	The proposed option/policy detracts from the achievement of the objective but not significantly.	-
Significant Negative Effect	The proposed option/policy detracts significantly from the achievement of the objective.	--
No Relationship	There is no clear relationship between the proposed option/policy and the achievement of the objective or the relationship is negligible.	~
Uncertain	The proposed option/policy has an uncertain relationship to the objective or the relationship is dependent on the way in which the aspect is managed. In addition, insufficient information may be available to enable an appraisal to be made.	?

NB: where more than one symbol/colour is presented in a box it indicates that the appraisal has identified both positive and negative effects. Where a box is coloured but also contains a '?', this indicates uncertainty over whether the effect could be a minor or significant effect although a professional judgement is expressed in the colour used. A conclusion of uncertainty arises where there is insufficient evidence for expert judgement to conclude an effect.

- 4.3.6 The completed appraisal matrices are presented at **Appendix E** (which is in a separate document accompanying this report). Summaries of the results of the appraisals are provided in **Section 5.3** of this report together with the Council's justification for the selection of the preferred options in light of the reasonable alternatives considered.

Policies

- 4.3.7 The proposed policies contained in the Draft Local Plan have been appraised against the SA objectives by plan chapter/subsection with a score awarded both for each constituent policy and for the cumulative effect of each chapter/subsection. A matrix has been used to record the findings of the appraisal, as shown in **Table 4.6**, adopting the qualitative scoring system set out in **Table 4.5**

and guided by the definitions of significance in **Appendix E**. The appraisal matrices are presented at **Appendix J** (both appendices are in a separate document which accompanies this report).

Table 4.6 Policy Appraisal Matrix

SA Objective	Policy xx	Policy xx	Policy xx Etc...	Cumulative Effect	Commentary
1. To improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.					<p><u>Likely Significant Effects</u></p> <p>A description of the likely significant effects of the plan policies on the SA objective has been provided here, drawing on baseline information as appropriate.</p> <p><u>Mitigation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation and enhancement measures are outlined here. <p><u>Assumptions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any assumptions made in undertaking the appraisal are listed here. <p><u>Uncertainties</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any uncertainties encountered during the appraisal are listed here.

Site Allocations

- 4.3.8 The Draft Local Plan identifies a total of 47 proposed site allocations (36 housing sites, 4 employment sites and 7 aggregates minerals sites). The number of housing site allocations has reduced slightly to reflect sites which now have planning permission and to slightly redistribute housing in the west of the County as a site in Haltwhistle was found to not be not available. No waste sites have been allocated in the plan and there are no Gypsy and Traveller sites. Existing waste management facilities and services have capacity to cater for additional waste produced over the plan period and so no waste sites have been allocated in the Draft Local Plan. There is a need for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots over the plan period, although the Council's updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment suggests that these will be needed over the medium term with existing sites likely to have potential to accommodate some additional pitches and plots, such that the location of any additional provision for these communities will be considered at the first review of the Local Plan after adoption.
- 4.3.9 The proposed housing site allocations have been appraised against the wider assessment criteria from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and SA objectives that comprise the SA Framework using tailored appraisal criteria and associated thresholds of significance. These criteria are set out in the Council's Housing Site Allocations and Appraisal Technical Paper available online at:
- <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>
- 4.3.10 Additionally, reasonable alternatives to the allocated housing, employment and minerals sites that have been considered by the Council in developing the Local Plan to-date have been subject to assessment.
- 4.3.11 It should be noted that in the first instance the site assessment and appraisal work does not take into account any mitigation provided by the Local Plan policies contained in the document. This is to ensure that all sites are considered equally.

- 4.3.12 The site appraisal criteria and outcomes of this assessment are presented in the Council's site appraisal assessments for housing, employment and minerals available online at:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>

Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects

- 4.3.13 The SEA Directive and SEA Regulations require that the secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects of the Draft Local Plan are assessed. In particular, it is important to consider the combined sustainability effects of the policies and proposals of the Draft Local Plan both alone and in-combination with other plans and programmes.
- 4.3.14 As noted above, the appraisal of the proposed Local Plan policies has been undertaken by chapter/subsection in order to determine the cumulative effects of each policy area/topic. In addition, a cumulative effects assessment has been undertaken in order to clearly identify areas where policies work together. This is presented in **Section 5.6**. Additional commentary is also provided with respect to where the policies and proposals of the Draft Local Plan may have effects in-combination with other plans and programmes.

4.4 When the SA Was Undertaken and by Whom

- 4.4.1 This SA of the Draft Local Plan was undertaken by Wood on behalf of Northumberland County Council in the Spring of 2019.

4.5 Difficulties Encountered in Undertaking the Appraisal

- 4.5.1 The SEA Directive requires the identification of any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered during the appraisal process. These uncertainties and assumptions are detailed in the appraisal matrices. Those uncertainties and assumptions common across the appraisal are outlined below.

Uncertainties

- The exact composition, timing and design of future development proposals is unknown and would be subject to planning approval;
- The extent to which job creation is locally significant will depend on the type of jobs created (in the context of the local labour market) and the recruitment policies of prospective employers;
- The level of investment in community facilities and services that may be stimulated by new development is uncertain at this stage and will in part be dependent on the policies of the Local Plan, site specific proposals and viability and approaches taken by developers;
- The extent to which the local plan can deliver safer communities is in part dependent on a number of socio-economic factors outwith the Local Plan and planning process;
- The precise location of new development will fully determine its environmental impacts, for example on biodiversity, the historic environment and landscape;
- The exact scale of greenhouse gas emissions associated with the implementation of the policies and proposals contained in the Draft Local Plan will be dependent on a number of factors including: the exact timing and design of new development; future travel patterns and trends; individual energy consumption behaviour; and the extent to which energy supply has been decarbonised over the plan period; and

- The exact scale of waste arisings associated with the Local Plan will be dependent on a number of factors including: the design of new development; waste collection and disposal regimes; and individual behaviour with regard to recycling and reuse.

Assumptions

- Parts of Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area are in flood zone 3. It is assumed that any development would subject to the sequential test in order to avoid development in flood zone 3;
- It is assumed that the Council will continue to liaise with Northumbrian Water with regard to infrastructure requirements for future development;
- Measures contained in Northumbrian Water's Water Resources Management Plan would be expected to help ensure that future water resource demands are met;
- There will be no development that will require diversion or modification of existing watercourses. However, if such measures are required, this could affect local water quality;
- It is assumed that, where appropriate, development proposals would be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and that suitable flood alleviation measures would be incorporated into the design of new development where necessary to minimise flood risk; and
- Housing and employment land allocations have taken account of minerals safeguarding areas.

5. Appraisal of the Draft Local Plan

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section presents the findings of the appraisal of the Draft Local Plan. It assesses the compatibility of the Local Plan Vision and Objectives with the SA objectives (**Section 5.2**) before summarising the appraisals of the development requirements and Spatial Strategy and the reasonable alternatives (**Section 5.3**), the site allocations (**Section 5.4**) and Local Plan policies (**Section 5.5**). The cumulative, synergistic and secondary effects of the Draft Local Plan, both alone and in-combination with other plans and programmes, are considered in **Section 5.6**. Suggested mitigation and enhancement is set out in **Section 5.7**. A summary of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) (which has been undertaken separately) is set out in **Section 5.8**.

5.2 Local Plan Vision and Objectives

- 5.2.1 A matrix has been completed to assess the compatibility of the spatial vision and objectives contained in the Draft Local Plan against the SA objectives. **Table 5.1** presents the results of this compatibility assessment. The vision and objectives have not changed since the initial Draft Local Plan was published for consultation.

Spatial Vision

- 5.2.2 The vision for the County seeks to deliver economic and social transformation whilst protecting and enhancing the environment. Reflecting its emphasis on these three strands of sustainability, the vision has been assessed as being compatible with the majority of the SA objectives. There is the potential for conflicts particularly between those elements of the vision that support economic growth and social transformation and SA objectives concerning environmental protection and enhancement (and vice-versa), although the extent of any conflict is likely to depend on how the vision is realised through the policies and proposals of the Draft Local Plan. In consequence, where the relationship between the vision and SA objectives relating to biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape has been assessed as being compatible, a degree of uncertainty has been identified.
- 5.2.3 Incompatibilities have been identified between the vision and waste and resource use (SA Objectives 9 and 15). This reflects the anticipated increase in the use of resources and generation of waste during the construction and operation of new development in the County.
- 5.2.4 The potential for both compatibilities and incompatibilities has been identified in respect of those SA objectives relating to health and wellbeing (SA Objective 1), land use (SA Objective 10), water (SA Objective 11), air quality (SA Objective 12) and climate change (SA Objective 14). This reflects the fact that, whilst the vision promotes environmental protection, health and wellbeing and high quality design, growth will inevitably lead to an increase in resource use, land take and emissions to air. The vision has also been assessed as having both a compatible and incompatible relationship with economy (SA Objective 5) and sustainable transport (SA Objective 7) as whilst it supports the creation of local employment opportunities and investment in infrastructure (which may help to reduce out commuting and promote the use of public transport), as well as reducing the need to travel, growth will inevitably lead to an increase in vehicle movements and associated vehicle emissions.
- 5.2.5 The vision does leave room for a number of uncertainties as potential conflicts could arise between growth, resource use and environmental factors. The effects are highly dependent on whether growth is achieved under consideration of economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Objectives

- 5.2.6 The Draft Local Plan objectives are broad ranging spanning key socio-economic and environmental themes. As a result, none of the Draft Local Plan objectives have been assessed as being incompatible with all of the SA objectives whilst compatibilities have been identified with each SA objective.
- 5.2.7 Those SA objectives that are particularly well supported by the Draft Local Plan objectives include SA objective 2 (community services), safety (SA objective 3), and housing (SA objective 4).
- 5.2.8 The Draft Local Plan objectives that support the protection and enhancement of the County's natural and built environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation and high quality design, meanwhile, have been assessed as being compatible with those SA objectives related to biodiversity (SA Objective 8), land use (SA Objective 10), water (SA Objective 11), air quality (SA Objective 12), flood risk (SA Objective 13), climate change (SA Objective 14), resource use (SA Objective 13), cultural heritage (SA Objective 16) and landscape (SA Objective 17).
- 5.2.9 The assessment presented in **Table 5.1** does highlight that in some instances tensions may exist between the two sets of objectives. Where tensions have been identified, this primarily relates to, on the one hand, the aspiration for growth to meet local needs and deliver economic prosperity, and on the other, the need to protect and enhance the County's environmental assets and minimise resource use, waste and greenhouse gas emissions. In this respect, the Draft Local Plan objectives 'Economy and Jobs', and 'Homes' in particular could have adverse impacts on sustainable transport (SA Objective 7), biodiversity (SA Objective 8), climate change (SA Objective 14), cultural heritage (SA Objective 16) and landscape (SA Objective 17) and will lead to increased resource use (including land and water), waste generation and emissions associated with new housing and economic development. Conversely, those Draft Local Plan objectives that seek to protect and enhance the County's environmental assets and address climate change could restrict new economic and residential development resulting in tensions in respect of SA Objective 4 (housing) and SA Objective 5 (economy) in particular.
- 5.2.10 The potential for both compatibilities and incompatibilities has been identified in respect of those SA objectives relating to (in particular) health and wellbeing (SA Objective 1), sustainable transport (SA Objective 7), land use (SA Objective 10), air quality (SA Objective 12) and climate change (SA Objective 14). This reflects the fact that, whilst new development could help to reduce the need to travel by car and associated emissions to air (through, for example, the provision of locally accessible community facilities and services and employment opportunities), development will inevitably lead to an increase in vehicle movements and emissions during both construction and operation. With respect to land use, the Draft Local Plan objectives will lead to demand for, and development on both previously developed land and greenfield land.
- 5.2.11 Where the assessment has identified uncertainties in the relationship between the Draft Local Plan objectives and SA objectives, this reflects uncertainties with regard to the scale, type and location of development that could come forward as a result of the implementation of the Local Plan, for flood risk (SA objective 13) in particular.
- 5.2.12 Where possible incompatibilities have been identified, tensions between the objectives can be resolved if development takes place in accordance with all of the Draft Local Plan objectives. As such, an incompatibility is not necessarily an insurmountable issue.

Table 5.1 Vision and Objectives Compatibility Assessment

SA Objective	Local Plan Spatial Vision and Objectives								
	Vision	Economy and Jobs	Homes	Environment	Connections	Community Health and Wellbeing	Climate Change	Resources	Quality of Place
1. Health and Wellbeing: To improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.	+/-	+/-	+	+	+/-	+	+	+	0
2. Community Services: To improve the quality, range and accessibility of community services and facilities	+	+	0	0	+	+	0	0	0
3. Safety: To deliver safer communities.	+	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	+
4. Housing: To ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home.	+	0	+	-	+	+	0	0	+
5. Economy: To strengthen and sustain a resilient local economy which offers local employment opportunities.	+/-	+	+	-	+	+	0	0	0
6. Education: To deliver accessible education and training opportunities.	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0
7. Sustainable Transport: To reduce the need for travel, promote more sustainable modes of transport and align investment in infrastructure with growth.	+/-	+/-	+/-	0	+	0	0	0	0
8. Biodiversity and Geodiversity: To conserve and enhance Northumberland's biodiversity and geodiversity.	+/?	+/-	+/-	+	0/?	0	+	+	0
9. Natural Resources: To ensure the prudent use and supply of natural resources.	-	-	-	+	0	0	0	+	0
10. Land Use: To encourage the efficient use of land.	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	0	0	0	+	+
11. Water Quality: To protect and enhance the quality of Northumberland's river, transitional and coastal and ground and surface water bodies.	+/-	-	-	+	0	0	0	+	0
12. Air Quality: To improve air quality.	+/-	-	-	+	+/-	0	+	+	0
13. Flood Risk: To reduce and or avoid flood risk to people and property.	+	0/?	0/?	+	0/?	0	+	0	+

Local Plan Spatial Vision and Objectives									
SA Objective	Vision	Economy and Jobs	Homes	Environment	Connections	Community Health and Wellbeing	Climate Change	Resources	Quality of Place
14. Climate Change Adaption: To minimise greenhouse gases and ensure resilience to the effects of climate change through effective mitigation and adaptation.	+/-	+/-	+/-	+	+	0	+	+	0
15. Waste Reduction: To reduce the amount of waste that is produced and increase the proportion that is reused, recycled and composted.	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	+	+
16. Cultural Heritage: To conserve and enhance Northumberland's cultural heritage and diversity.	+/?	+/-	+/-	+	0/?	0	0	0	+
17. Landscape: To conserve and enhance Northumberland's cultural heritage and diversity.	+/?	+/-	+/-	+	0/?	0	0	+	+

Key

+	Compatible	?	Uncertain
0	Neutral	-	Incompatible

NB: where more than one symbol/colour is presented in a box it indicates that the appraisal has identified both compatibilities and incompatibilities between the Draft Local Plan vision/objectives and the SA objectives. Where a box is coloured but also contains a '?', this indicates a degree of uncertainty regarding the relationship between the Draft Local Plan vision/objectives and the SA objectives although a professional judgement is expressed in the colour used.

5.3 Development Requirements and the Spatial Strategy

- 5.3.1 The spatial strategy, housing target and employment land target of the Draft Local Plan (as set out in Policies, STP1, HOU2 and ECN6 and collectively referred to as the development requirements) have been appraised against the SA objectives in accordance with the approach set out in **Section 4**. The proposed minor modifications to the Publication Draft Local Plan include some suggested minor wording changes to policies STP1, ECN6, and deletion of two criteria from Policy HOU2 but the spatial strategy, and housing and employment land targets remain the same as those in the Publication Draft Local Plan. The findings of the appraisal are presented in **Appendix E** (which is in a separate document which accompanies this report) for each constituent component. **Table 5.2** summarises the findings of the appraisal and identifies the cumulative likely significant effects of the development requirements.

Table 5.2 Summary of the Appraisal of the Development Requirements and Spatial Strategy

SA Objective	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Objective 6	Objective 7	Objective 8	Objective 9	Objective 10	Objective 11	Objective 12	Objective 13	Objective 14	Objective 15	Objective 16	Objective 17
Housing provision (17,700 dwellings)	+/ -	+	+/ ?	+	+	+/ -	+/ -	-	-	+/ -/?	-	-	0/?	-	--	+/ -	+/ -
Employment provision (242 ha)	+/ -	+	+/ ?	0/+/?	+	+	+/ -	-	-	+/ -	-	+/ -	0/?	-	-	+/ -	+/ -
Spatial strategy	+/ -	+	0	+	+	+/ -	+/ -	-	-	+/ -/?	-	+/ -	0/?	+/ -	-	+/ -	+/ -
Cumulative Effect of the Development Requirements	+/ -	+	+/ ?	+	+	+/ -	+/ -	-	-	+/ -/?	-	+/ -	0/?	+/ -	-	+/ -	+/ -

5.3.2 The housing provision is anticipated to have a number of positive effects on the SA objectives, particularly in relation to: health, as it will help to improve living standards; housing, as it will greatly enhance people's chances of living in and owning their own home; economy, as it will attract new residents into the County thereby increasing the local workforce; partly on transport, as it will help to utilise existing public transport services; and partly on land use, as it will help to re-use PDL (there are 18 new brownfield sites and 17 new greenfield sites in the Draft Local Plan which equates to 53% on brownfield and 47% on greenfield and for the housing supply as a whole 13% is on brownfield, 14% mixed brownfield and greenfield and 74% is on greenfield). Delivery of the housing provision in accordance with requirements for good design would help to avoid landscape or cultural heritage harm and there could be enhancements as part of new housing developments.

5.3.3 The employment provision is lower than that in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan reflecting that less land is available at the Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area than previously thought and that following development over the last 12 months, there is now less employment land available. The provision (both the new allocations and land carried forward) is also anticipated to have a number of positive effects on the SA objectives, it will help to raise wealth levels and in turn improve living standards which will have a positive effect on health and wellbeing, it will indirectly help to have positive effects in relation to housing as it will increase people's chances of living in their own home, it will help to strengthen and sustain the economy of Northumberland through provision of new employment land to meet needs and to encourage inward investment, and it will in part have positive effects on transport as a number of the employment sites are in accessible locations and therefore could utilise existing public transport connections and may stimulate investment in public transport. The new dwellings and employment provision will help to reuse PDL (there is 8.5ha of land available at the Blyth Estuary strategic employment site which is brownfield land and there is 53.6ha of brownfield land allocated in the Draft Local Plan for economic development) and so this will in part have positive effects in relation to land use, although greenfield land will also be required (the West Hartford strategic employment site (32.3ha) is greenfield and then 24.3ha of Green Belt and greenfield land has been allocated in the Draft Local Plan for economic development).

- 5.3.4 Negative effects have been identified against biodiversity (SA objective 8), resource use (SA objective 9), and water quality (SA objective 11). This is reflective of the loss of greenfield land and associated impacts on biodiversity, use of natural resources associated with the development of 17,700 homes and 242ha of employment land, and increase in use of water resources.
- 5.3.5 There will be an overall increase in waste generation associated with the development of the housing provision and so there are significant negative effects on objective 15. There are also mixed positive and significant negative effects on landscape (SA objective 17) reflecting the loss of greenfield land and landscape changes of new development and the limited Green Belt releases for employment development.
- 5.3.6 For both the housing and employment provision there are anticipated negative effects in relation to air quality as there will inevitably be an increase in traffic associated with the delivery of new dwellings and development of the employment land, although overall mitigated to an extent by measures promoting sustainable modes of transport. This will also have negative effects in relation to human health and climate change associated with an increase in vehicle emissions, although this would be mitigated to an extent by policies elsewhere in the plan promoting the use of sustainable modes of transport and masterplanning as part of the detailed development planning for individual sites. There will also be an increase in carbon generation associated with new development through construction of housing and employment developments.
- 5.3.7 Whilst the majority of the 17,700 houses are provided by existing housing commitments with planning permission and through neighbourhood plan allocations, there will still be a range of effects as described above for the delivery of the houses not yet completed over the plan period.

Appraisal of Alternatives and Reasons for the Selection of the Preferred Growth Requirement and for the Rejection of Alternatives

Appraisal of the Alternatives

- 5.3.8 Four housing growth scenarios have been considered by the Council as part of the development of the Draft Local Plan:
- **Option 1:** Baseline 'business as usual' official projections (6,900 additional workplace jobs – 314 per annum, 10,186 dwellings over the plan period with 509 dwellings per annum);
 - **Option 2:** Local housing need standard method – average household growth 2016-26 rolled forward (14,340 dwellings over the plan period with 717 dwellings per annum);
 - **Option 3:** Intermediate jobs-led (12,100 additional workplace jobs – 550 per annum, 15,533 dwellings per annum with 777 dwellings per annum); and
 - **Option 4:** Ambitious jobs-led growth (16,500 additional workplace jobs – 750 per annum, 17,700 dwellings over the plan period with 885 dwellings per annum).
- 5.3.9 Each of these options has been appraised to test their respective sustainability strengths and weaknesses with the results presented in a matrix in **Appendix F**, with a summary of the results presented below in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.3 Summary of the Appraisal of the Housing and Employment Growth Options

SA Objective	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Objective 6	Objective 7	Objective 8	Objective 9	Objective 10	Objective 11	Objective 12	Objective 13	Objective 14	Objective 15	Objective 16	Objective 17
Option 1: Baseline 'business as usual' Official Projections	+	+	+	+/-	?/-	?	+/-	+/-/?	-	+/-	-	-	0/?	-	-	+/-	+/-
Option 2: Local housing need standard method.	+	+	+	+/	+/	?	+	+/	-	+/	-	-	0/?	-	-	+/	+/
Option 3: Intermediate jobs-led growth.	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	+/	-	+	-	-	0/?	-	-	+/	+/
Option 4: Ambitious jobs-led growth.	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	+/	-	+	-	-	0/?	-	-	+/	+/

Reasons for the Selection of the Preferred Housing Requirement

5.3.10 The NPPF (2018) has implemented a new standard method for calculating local housing need developed by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG), to enable all communities to have a clear, transparent understanding of the homes they need as a minimum. The PPG notes that *"The standard method for assessing local housing need provides the minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in an area. It does not attempt to predict the impact that future government policies, changing economic circumstances or other factors might have on demographic behaviour. Therefore there will be circumstances where actual housing need may be higher than the figure identified by the standard method"* (Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 2a-010-20180913 Revision date: 13 09 2018).

5.3.1 Where additional growth above historic trends is likely to or is planned to occur over the plan period, an appropriate uplift may be considered. This will be an uplift to identify housing need specifically and should be undertaken prior to and separate from considering how much of this need can be accommodated in a housing requirement figure. Circumstances where this may be appropriate include, but are not limited to:

- Where growth strategies are in place, particularly where those growth strategies identify that additional housing above historic trends is needed to support growth or funding is in place to promote and facilitate growth (e.g. Housing Deals);
- Where strategic infrastructure improvements are planned that would support new homes; and
- Where an authority has agreed to take on unmet need calculated using the standard method, from neighbouring authorities, as set out in a statement of common ground.

- 5.3.2 The Council are preparing a positive plan to support wider growth initiatives including the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), the North of Tyne devolution deal and the Borderlands initiative, as well as seeking to address the ageing population of Northumberland.
- 5.3.3 For Northumberland (once affordability is factored in) the average annual housing dwelling requirement is 885 per annum. The Council commissioned independent analyses to ascertain how economic growth may further impact on the County's future population and the housing requirement. The 'business as usual' growth option (Option 1) is below the minimum local housing need figure for Northumberland and is therefore included for reference purposes only, against which the other options have been considered. The alternative growth scenario options are listed above (Options 2 to 4). The minimum local housing need figure (Option 2) only considers the projected growth in household population and affordability, and so does not in itself take account of wider economic growth options.
- 5.3.4 In recognition of the Council's economic ambitions which are linked to Northumberland contributing to delivering the objectives of the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), the North of Tyne devolution deal and the Borderlands Initiative¹⁰¹, together with completed, committed and proposed infrastructure improvements, the Council has considered that there is sufficient justification to have a total housing figure in excess of the standard methodology figure that delivers on an ambitious level of growth.
- 5.3.5 Consequently, the Council has taken forward the ambitious jobs-led growth scenario to inform the housing requirement. This scenario requires 17,700 dwellings to be delivered over the plan period, at an average of 885 per annum.

Reasons for the Rejection of Alternatives

- 5.3.6 As set out above, four options for housing growth have been considered by the Council.
- 5.3.7 The 'business as usual' option (Option 1) has been rejected by the Council as this would not provide enough housing to meet needs over the plan period.
- 5.3.8 The Council considers that the development of a strategy aligned with the latest population projections and with only an adjustment to take into account affordability (Option 2 - the local housing need option) does not include provision for economic growth and represents a minimum level of housing rather than an optimal level of housing. The Council considers that Option 2 has the potential to have a number of adverse effects including:
- Reduction in levels of wealth created and retained within the County;
 - Further pressure on public sector spending on social care and welfare;
 - Impacts of reduced local expenditure;
 - Innovation and creativity may be suppressed – those who have marketable or transferable skills moving elsewhere to find employment or further, higher education or training;
 - County as a whole could become less competitive;
 - Risk of lower aspirations in education and learning;

¹⁰¹ This is an informal arrangement between the five local authorities either side of the border between England and Scotland, namely Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland County Council and Scottish Borders Council. It aims to unlock cross-border growth potential in the types of tourism and small scale activities that can flourish in remote rural areas, thanks to advances in technology.

- Reduction in wealth creation may also result in reduced investment in buildings and spaces which make up the fabric of the County's towns and villages, together with natural and historic environments;
- Impacts on the ability to attract new investment in the new economy – digital, media, telecommunications and software; and
- A lack of choice in the housing market across the County, inhibiting the ability of the existing households to secure the homes they need, and attract a working age population.

5.3.9 In order to support the wider growth ambitions and objectives of the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), the North of Tyne devolution deal and the Borderlands Initiative, together with completed, committed and proposed infrastructure improvements two jobs-led growth scenarios have been considered – intermediate and ambitious. The intermediate option (Option 3) has also been rejected as the Council are being positive with the extent of support for economic growth ambitions and have thus selected the ambitious jobs-led scenario as the preferred basis for the Local Plan's housing requirement (Option 4).

Reasons for the Selection of the Preferred Employment Requirement

5.3.10 Further to the housing growth scenarios outlined above, the Council are taking forward the 'ambitious growth' scenario. This development strategy is predicated on an ambition to support the delivery of additional, better paid and higher skilled jobs in the County, and to provide homes to meet not only the needs of the resident population, but also to accommodate the needs of people moving into Northumberland, who create and fulfil jobs across the County. This reflects ambitions set out in:

- The North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), which aims for an uplift of 11% in the number of jobs in the region between 2014 and 2024, ensuring that 60% of these will result in higher skilled, more productive and better quality job opportunities;
- The 'North of Tyne' deal, administered through a soon-to-be-elected Mayor, building on the diverse economic potential across the three authorities concerned - within Northumberland, focussing on the rural economy and tourism sectors as the County's key strengths; and
- A 'Borderlands' arrangement with south of Scotland authorities and Cumbria, seeking to unlock cross-border growth potential in the types of tourism and small scale technology-based activities that can flourish in more remote rural areas.

5.3.11 This means that there will be some 15,000 jobs sought during the Local Plan period, which is around 8,700 more than the 'business as usual' situation. Translation of this future jobs growth into employment land needs has suggested that even with the higher growth scenario placing reliance on certain market sectors in the economy which are land hungry, the modelled requirement for available land shows that only about 40 hectares of employment land is then needed for the Draft Local Plan period.

5.3.12 However, the Council regards the provision of a wide range of employment land and premises across the County (tailored for a wide range of users) as a vital part of the strategy for Northumberland's economy. On this basis the Council considers that it is key to the strategy to allocate and reserve more land for future employment needs than basic forecasts would suggest. In deciding the amount of employment land to allocate a numbers of factors have influenced this, including:

- It is not considered desirable or prudent to plan for the exhaustion of the supply of land by the end of the Local Plan period;

- There are strategic employment needs in the County that require their own dedicated land;
- More generally the Council considers that it is important to maintain a wide portfolio of employment sites due to the spread out geography of the County;
- Sometimes the development of employment is simply required to allow a premises to expand for extra plant or machinery and so there is not always additional jobs created;
- A need to cover expected losses of employment land as there can be sound planning reasons for land to be lost to non-employment uses;
- It would not be appropriate to de-allocate some employment sites in serviced employment areas as such sites would not be appropriate for other uses;
- There is need for policy intervention in specific cases e.g. the relatively recent closure of the Alcan smelter is still a problem in that area; and
- Where employment areas are developed, a proportion of that is supporting uses e.g. roads or substations.

5.3.13 Further to the above considerations, the evidence base work¹⁰² undertaken in support of the Draft Local Plan has provided a strong steer on which areas of the County have experienced surpluses or shortages of employment land. This identified shortages in towns to the west of Tyneside and possible oversupply in parts of South East Northumberland. From the evidence base work the Council were able to conclude which monitored employment areas should be taken forward and within those areas how much undeveloped (available) land remains. The evidence gathered identified additional land to meet key requirements in certain locations.

5.3.14 In total, 242 hectares of employment land is brought forward in the Draft Local Plan, comprised of:

- 41 hectares on strategic employment sites; and
- 201 hectares of generally available land (which includes the 78ha of new employment land allocated).

5.3.15 The strategic sites have been identified separately from the general employment land as the Council are keen to see specific types of employment development at these sites, for example supporting the renewables offshore industry at Blyth. It should be noted that much of the 41 hectares allocated for specialised uses on the strategic sites has some sort of option or limitation on it (and is a lower figure than that proposed in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan reflecting that less land is available for development at Blyth than previously thought).

5.3.16 Chapter 5 of the Draft Local Plan provides further information about the reason for the selection of the preferred employment requirement.

Reasons for the Rejection of Alternatives

5.3.17 As set out above, translation of the future jobs growth into employment land needs has suggested that the modelled requirement for available land is 40.3 hectares of employment land. However, the Council are seeking to prepare a positive plan which will support Northumberland's economy and wider growth ambitions, as well as addressing the ageing population in Northumberland and so the Council consider that to support this a wide range of employment land and premises across the County (tailored for a wide range of users) needs to be provided. Given that the Council is planning for ambitious growth, and recognises the need to protect more land for employment purposes than even Option 4 would suggest, Options 1 to 3 have been rejected.

¹⁰² Available at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx> [Accessed May 2018].

Appraisal of the Alternatives and Reasons for the Selection of the Preferred Spatial Strategy and for the Rejection of Alternatives

Appraisal of the Alternatives

- 5.3.18 Five options were considered by the Council for the potential distribution of development in the County as set out below:
- **Distribution Option 1:** Proportionate distribution. This approach would focus the majority of new development in Northumberland's key settlements with smaller scale development allowed elsewhere in order to support local services and the rural economy. Development in the open countryside would be restricted;
 - **Distribution Option 2:** Proportionate distribution within the constraints of the Green Belt. This approach would focus development to the most sustainable locations in the County, would leave existing Green Belt boundaries largely intact, ensure that the countryside is safeguarded from encroachment, check unrestricted urban sprawl, prevent the merging of settlements, and [reserve the character and setting of historic settlements;
 - **Distribution Option 3:** Proportionate distribution with additional targeted growth. This approach integrates the principles of Option 1 but builds in provision for additional targeted growth. It would also direct additional development and growth in a number of key settlements, primarily in the south east and central parts of the County well connected to Tyneside and require land to be deleted from the Green Belt around a number of larger settlements;
 - **Distribution Option 4:** Dispersed distribution. This approach would allow for increased development opportunities across Northumberland but specifically in the settlements in rural areas, with fewer developments being delivered in the market towns and urban areas when compared to other options; and
 - **Distribution Option 5:** New Settlements. This approach would allow for development to be focussed in new settlements, of a scale to enable the level of development to support a number of key services. To ensure new settlements are sustainable, they should be located close to key employment centres and transport links. By their nature new settlements would be in the countryside.
- 5.3.19 These alternatives have been appraised. The results of this assessment are provided in **Appendix G** (which is in a separate document which accompanies this report), with a summary provided in **Table 5.4** below.

Table 5.4 Summary of the Appraisal of the Preferred Spatial Strategy and Reasonable Alternatives

SA Objective	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Objective 6	Objective 7	Objective 8	Objective 9	Objective 10	Objective 11	Objective 12	Objective 13	Objective 14	Objective 15	Objective 16	Objective 17
Option 1 - Proportionate Distribution	+	+	~	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	/-	+		+	+	+	+	/-	--	/-	/-	/-	+	/-	/-	+	+
	/?						/-	-		-	/?	-	/-	-	-	/-	-
Option 2 - Proportionate Distribution within the constraints of the Green Belt	+	+	~	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	/-	+		+	+	+	+	/-	/-	+	/-	/-	+	/-	/-	+	+
	/?						/-	/?	-	/-	/?	-	/-	-	-	/-	-
Option 3 - Proportionate Distribution with Additional Targeted Growth	+	+	~	+	+	+	+	+	--	+	+	--	+	+	+	+	+
	/-	+		+	+	+	+	/-	--	/-	/-	--	/-	/-	/-	+	+
	/?						/-	-		-	/?		/-	-	-	/-	-
Option 4 - Dispersed Distribution	+	+	~	+	+	+	+	+	--	+	+	--	+	+	+	+	+
	/-						/-	-		/-	/-		/-	/-	/-	+	+
	/?									-	/?			-	-	/-	-
Option 5 - New Settlements	+	+	~	+	+	+	+	+	--	--	+	--	+	+	+	+	+
	/-						/-	/-	--	--	/-	--	/-	/-	/-	+	+
	/?							-			/?		/-	-	-	/-	-

5.3.20 Option 2 is the Council's preferred option for the distribution of development in the County in the Draft Local Plan. This option has been selected as it will facilitate the distribution of development to the most sustainable locations in the County, whilst also respecting the constraints of the Green Belt which covers large areas of the south of the County.

5.3.21 The distribution options identified are all expected to have significant positive effects on housing (SA Objective 4) by providing new housing across Northumberland, except for Option 5, as the option would only provide development in new settlements to the detriment of meeting need elsewhere in the County (and that the amount of housing that would be provided could be affected by Green Belt constraints). All of the options will have positive effects on the range and accessibility of community services and facilities (SA Objective 2), economy (SA Objective 5) and the

delivery and accessibility of educational facilities (SA Objective 6) by encouraging the creation of new development across the County. However, Option 4 is expected to have a minor positive effect rather than a significant positive effect, due to it mainly concentrating new development in rural areas. Options 1, 2 and 3 would result in considerable positive effects with regard to reducing the need to travel within the County (SA Objective 7) as new developments are located near to key settlements and where they are needed. Option 4 and 5 would only have minor positive effects due to the focusing of developments in rural areas (and countryside in the case of the new settlement) that are less accessible and often require greater use of the car. However, each of the five options are likely to result in more traffic upon Northumberland's road network.

- 5.3.22 Minor negative effects have also been identified for objectives 1, 11, 13, 16 with significant negative effects anticipated on objectives 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 17. These are negative effects in part as there are also positive effects on these objectives except for objectives 9 and 12. The creation of new developments will have an effect on the natural environment and its associated assets, though this will be mitigated to an extent by locating developments in sustainable locations. Option 2 has overall less negative effects than the other options due to it resulting in the loss of the smallest amount of Green Belt land, whilst the other options are expected to have more of an adverse effect on the Green Belt and in turn land use (SA Objective 10). Under Option 5, if new settlements were to be located close to key employment centres (primarily those in the south east of Northumberland and the Tyneside conurbation), this could result in the greatest loss of Green Belt land which could also have a significant negative effect on landscape (SA objective 17). Options 3, 4 and 5 would increase the amount of traffic on Northumberland's local road network more than Options 1 and 2 due to either requiring more development than the other options (Option 3) or by locating development in rural areas where there would be less access to sustainable modes of transport (Option 4) or being the source of new traffic (Option 5). This will result in Options 3, 4 and 5 having a significant negative effect on air quality whilst Options 1 and 2 do have positive effects in part on air quality.

Reasons for the Selection of the Preferred Spatial Strategy

- 5.3.23 The Council's preferred Spatial Strategy is proportionate distribution within the constraints of the Green Belt. This approach would focus development to the most sustainable locations in the County, would leave existing Green Belt boundaries largely intact, ensure that the countryside is safeguarded from encroachment, check unrestricted urban sprawl, prevent the merging of settlements, and preserve the character and setting of historic settlements.
- 5.3.24 The more urban South East Northumberland, together with the County's market towns are where most development is focussed. However, the plan also encourages development in rural areas to support the rural economy and to maintain the vitality and sustainability of communities and the retention of services. This approach will also help to enable local people to live in the communities in which they grew up.
- 5.3.25 The Draft Local Plan directs development to the locations where it can support, and benefit from the use of existing local infrastructure and facilities, and support economic growth, whilst also protecting the countryside and character of settlements. New development is focussed in those locations which benefit from existing facilities and/or have the greatest potential to support new facilities and services, as a result of their location and / or a result of the size of the population within them. This approach allows limited resources to be allocated in an effective way that maximises access to facilities and services.
- 5.3.26 The Green Belt in Northumberland plays an important role in helping to direct development to the most sustainable locations. The Council considers that due to having a significant amount of housing already committed across the County there are no special circumstances to justify the alteration of the Green Belt and release Green Belt land for housing development. The spatial

strategy therefore aims to direct most housing development to the larger settlements, and villages with a number of key services but without loss of any Green Belt land. There are some limited Green Belt alterations to support economic growth with changes to boundaries in a small number of locations.

- 5.3.27 The spatial strategy also recognises that the Green Belt extends across large areas of the County's countryside, which happens to be areas that can be most easily reached from the conurbation. As this area contains hundreds of farming and other small businesses the Council are keen to ensure that the Draft Local Plan does not unduly stifle rural economic development or the local economy. Within the boundaries of the Green Belt, the Council are seeking to ensure that the Draft Local Plan provides sufficient housing allocations and employment land to meet needs

What has informed the Spatial Strategy?

- 5.3.28 The preferred Spatial Strategy (as set out in Strategic Policy STP1) and the settlement hierarchy is based on a number of key considerations including national planning policy, the Local Plan vision and objectives, and an overall principle of seeking to allocate development to the most sustainable locations in the County. As the Green Belt covers a large area of the south of the County and that Green Belt land can only be released for development in exceptional circumstances, this has been a key constraint in the formulation of the preferred Spatial Strategy.
- 5.3.29 The spatial strategy has been informed by feedback received from a consultation exercise undertaken by the Council in Spring 2018 to collect views on preferred strategic locations for development. The consultation took the form of an online spatial survey where respondents were asked to place their preferred locations for housing and employment on a map.
- 5.3.30 The responses showed a preference for a clustering of locations for housing and employment in the main towns and service centres. The highest number of preferred locations suggested were in the south of the County.
- 5.3.31 The various evidence base studies which have been undertaken in support of the Local Plan have also informed the spatial strategy. These include studies identifying the need for housing and employment land, and the availability of sites to accommodate this demand.

Conclusion

- 5.3.32 In conclusion, the Council considers that the preferred Spatial Strategy has been informed by a range of considerations (as detailed above) which indicate that it performs well in terms of sustainability.

Reasons for the Rejection of Alternatives

- 5.3.33 As noted above, four alternatives were also considered by the Council for the potential distribution of development in the County as set out below, with reasons for their rejection also detailed:
- **Distribution Option 1:** Proportionate distribution. This approach would focus the majority of new development in Northumberland's key settlements with smaller scale development allowed elsewhere in order to support local services and the rural economy. This option would have a number of significant negative effects including on biodiversity, land use and in part on landscape as Green Belt land would be lost to development (in addition to greenfield land). There would also be negative effects in relation to resource use and in relation to air quality and climate change from vehicle emissions associated with the new development through this distribution option. As additional development to meet needs within the County can largely be accommodated without Green Belt releases (except for some limited releases for new employment sites), it is not considered that special

circumstances exist for such releases for the growth proposed through this distribution option;

- Distribution Option 3:** Proportionate distribution with additional targeted growth. This approach integrates the principles of Option 1 but builds in provision for additional targeted growth. It would also direct additional development and growth in a number of key settlements, primarily in the south east and central parts of the County well connected to Tyneside and require land to be deleted from the Green Belt and released for development around a number of larger settlements. This approach would build upon the positive implications of option 1, particularly in the south and east of the County, but would have a number negative effects as it may result in encroachment of development into the countryside, an element of sprawl, risks the merger of settlements and have an effect on the character and setting of historic settlements. This option would have significant negative effects in part on landscape as Green Belt land would be released (in addition to loss of greenfield land). The additional targeted growth would increase resource use and waste generation and emissions from vehicles, and in turn have negative effects on air quality and climate change, which would be greater through this option from the additional growth. As additional development to meet needs within the County can largely be accommodated without Green Belt releases (except for some limited releases for new employment sites), it is not considered that special circumstances exist for such releases for the scale of growth proposed through this distribution option;
- Distribution Option 4:** Dispersed distribution. This approach would allow for increased development opportunities across Northumberland but specifically in the settlements in rural areas, with less development being delivered in the market towns and urban areas when compared to other options. Whilst this approach would support rural growth, and deliver other benefits within the rural areas, it is considered that it does not align with wider principles of sustainable development, and would not meet the growth requirements of the County overall. Such an option would also require Green Belt deletion, without sufficient justification with regard to exceptional circumstances. The viability of maintaining and providing services, including those provided by the Council, for an increasingly dispersed population would become increasingly problematic over the lifetime of the plan;
- Distribution Option 5:** New settlements. This approach would allow for development to be focussed in new settlements, of a scale to enable the level of development to support a number of key services. To ensure new settlements are sustainable, they should be located close to key employment centres and transport links. By their nature, new settlements would be in the countryside. However, if a new settlement was located close to Tyneside, this would ensure access to employment opportunities in South East Northumberland and it would be less likely to support rural development. Conversely siting a settlement away from employment centres, or with limited access to them, would create challenges in delivering economic objectives. A new settlement approach would reduce the level of development going to established towns and villages, and not provide opportunities to enhance their vitality, and may affect the viability of key services and facilities within them. Development may therefore not be in the most sustainable locations in the County.

5.4 Proposed Site Allocations

- 5.4.1 The findings of the assessment of both the proposed site allocations and all reasonable alternatives are available in the Council's housing site appraisal technical paper which is available online at:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>

- 5.4.2 It should be noted that this appraisal does not take into account any mitigation provided by the other proposed Local Plan policies. This is to ensure that all sites are treated equally.

Reasons for the Selection of the Preferred Site Allocations and for the Rejection of Alternatives

- 5.4.3 The reasons for the selection of the preferred site allocations and the rejection of the reasonable alternatives is set out below.

Reasons for the Selection of the Preferred Site Allocations

- 5.4.4 The selection of the preferred site allocations has been informed by the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and a 'call for sites' that the Council issued between 12th February and 12th March 2018, alongside other evidence base studies, while also taking account of those sites which already have planning permission or extant permissions for development. The SHLAA resulted in a filtering exercise for sites in the County, from an initial list of 3,818 site records of which 2,481 are medium to large-sized site of 0.2 hectares or more or that have capacity for five or more dwellings. 238 specific sites form part of the five year supply of 'deliverable' sites for housing, with a further 525 sites considered to be potentially 'developable' in the plan period. For those settlements where the distribution of housing requirements suggests that there are some unmet needs having taken account of outstanding commitments, the preferred allocations have been taken from the identified supply of 'developable' sites.
- 5.4.5 No waste sites have been allocated in the plan and there are no Gypsy and Traveller sites. Existing waste management facilities and services have capacity to cater for additional waste produced over the plan period. As noted in the non-technical summary, there is a need for new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots over the plan period, although the Council's updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment suggests that these will be needed over the medium term with existing sites likely to have potential to accommodate some additional pitches and plots, such that the location of any additional provision for these communities will be considered at the first review of the Local Plan after adoption.
- 5.4.6 The paragraphs below provide information on the reasons for the selection of the preferred housing, employment and minerals sites and the rejection of the alternatives.

Housing

- 5.4.7 The need for housing allocations in particular settlements has been informed by establishing whether there are sufficient housing commitments already in place to meet local housing needs in different parts of the county. These settlement, parish and delivery area housing requirements are informed by the Plan's spatial strategy and using disaggregated 'Local Housing Need' identified by the Government's standard methodology as set out in the revised planning practice guidance as a broad guide.
- 5.4.8 The Local Plan's spatial strategy is to direct development to the larger settlements and those with key services. Allocations are only proposed in settlements identified as Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages where deliverable commitments are not sufficient to meet the local need and therefore allocations are not proposed outside of these areas in the County.
- 5.4.9 Candidate sites for allocation have been informed by the SHLAA. The SHLAA identifies whether sites are deliverable, developable, or not currently developable, and provides an indicative number of dwellings that could be delivered on sites, and their potential timescales for delivery.
- 5.4.10 Given that sites which benefit from a planning permission or are minded to approve are already committed, they are not considered for allocation in the Local Plan. Most of these sites are considered deliverable in the SHLAA.

- 5.4.11 Only developable sites which are not committed, in the locations where allocations are required, are progressed to the site appraisal process for the purposes of allocations. These are considered candidate sites for allocation. Sites which are not currently developable are discounted from the allocations process at this stage.
- 5.4.12 In a number of locations, candidate sites for allocation were sought but no developable sites have been found. Therefore, no allocations have been progressed in:
- Bardon Mill, Henshaw and Redburn;
 - Gilsland;
 - Newbrough and Fourstones;
 - Ovingham;
 - Riding Mill and Broomhaugh;
 - Stamfordham; and
 - Wylam.
- 5.4.13 From the list of potentially suitable housing sites an assessment exercise has been carried out using criteria from the SHLAA and specific site appraisal criteria developed using the SA objectives. These criteria are set out in **Appendix H** (which is in a separate document which accompanies this report).
- 5.4.14 This assessment exercise has considered a number of factors including the suitability of the site for development, the availability of the site, likely achievability of development and the deliverability of the site, and the following constraints:
- Proximity to services (including public transport, schools, town or service centres and health facilities);
 - Proximity to designated sites and features (including: biodiversity e.g. national and local nature reserves, local wildlife sites, European designated conservation sites); cultural heritage (e.g. scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings); and landscape (e.g. designated landscapes such as the National Park or AONB));
 - Presence of flood risk (whether site comprises of flood zone 3 land);
 - Health and Safety Executive consultation zone; and
 - Agricultural land classification.
- 5.4.15 Taking into account all the factors, those sites which are considered to be most suitable, deliverable and sustainable are the ones which the Council has taken forward for allocation in the Draft Local Plan. Sites considered and discounted from the allocation process, and through the SHLAA are also detailed in the Housing Site Allocations Selection and Appraisal Technical Paper on the Council's website under 'Studies and evidence reports', available at:
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>
- 5.4.16 There are a handful of housing site allocations that were included in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan which now have planning permission and so these are not being taken forward in the Draft Local Plan. The spread of housing throughout the County has also been reviewed and slightly redistributed within the Delivery Areas, with additional allocations also being made to take account of a few lapsed planning permissions and sites that are no longer considered to be developable.

Employment

- 5.4.17 For the previously withdrawn Core Strategy the 2011 Employment Land Review (ELR) and the 2015 Employment Land and Premises Demand Study were the primary sources of evidence in respect of employment growth and allocations. This evidence has been reviewed and is considered to be sufficiently up-to-date that it could be used to inform the development of the Draft Local Plan. The ELR used long term employment projections provided by Experian to determine possible job and GVA growth scenarios and these were then subsequently updated by the Council using a similar methodological approach but based on revised employment projections from the university in 2014. Collectively that provided the basis of the objectively assessed need (OAN) for the previously withdrawn Core Strategy. A further update¹⁰³ was carried out by Peter Brett Associates to inform the development of the Publication Draft Local Plan and the subsequent submission of the Local Plan for examination.
- 5.4.18 This evidence base indicates that the County has an overall oversupply of employment land and so a degree of rationalisation of land supply is required but economic growth could be constrained in certain submarkets in the County over the plan period owing to a lack of available land for new business growth. The Council is therefore keen to ensure that there is a flexible supply of employment land to meet needs, to help attract inward investment and meet wider growth ambitions in the North East Strategic Economic Plan, the North of Tyne devolution deal and the Borderlands Initiative.
- 5.4.19 Through the ELR there was a call for sites in spring 2010 as part of the study in order to provide options where additional demand for employment space could be provided. This exercise produced 32 site options, with 9 being proposed by the owner/developer for b-class development. Each site was assessed using the ELR methodology to review the existing land portfolio with the results of the assessments in the ELR Appendices¹⁰⁴.
- 5.4.20 It became apparent that many of the sites proposed by developers were in areas that had not been identified through the ELR as needing new employment land and so for this reason were not considered suitable for allocation for employment purposes. The ELR had also associated some sites with settlements which are quite distant and so the reality was that those sites were physically isolated from the town in question and so were also considered unsuitable. Where it was the case that a site is still available for employment uses and could serve the settlement identified in the evidence base as requiring additional employment it has been included in the assessment for the Draft Local Plan.
- 5.4.21 A second call for sites was undertaken in 2013, as part of a joint site search with the SHLAA. Those submitting land for potential residential use were asked if they would be willing to consider employment development on their land and this resulted in 43 sites being submitted through this process, some of which had been considered before but a handful of new sites came forward and were added to the sites assessed.
- 5.4.22 A recent call for sites for the 2018 SHLAA brought forward 14 sites for potential employment uses and 30 sites for a mix of uses including employment. Again this included some sites in isolated locations and sites previously assessed and then a handful of new sites.
- 5.4.23 Sites for each settlement have been mapped to approximately match quantitative land need identified in the evidence base. Site options provide genuine alternatives for the allocation of land,

¹⁰³ Peter Brett Associates Housing and Economic Growth Options: Findings Report (June 2018).

¹⁰⁴ Available online at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Studies%20and%20Evidence%20Reports/Economy%20Retail%20Studies/2.%20ELR/EB09-Employment-Land-Review-Update-October-2013.pdf> [Accessed May 2018].

but known constraints for each settlement were considered when identifying site options. Site identification has particularly considered the following:

- Importance of unconstrained access;
- Level topography for the development of large building; and
- Issues and opportunities concerning current and planned infrastructure.

5.4.24

The detailed assessment methodology for the employment sites has considered various factors including availability, achievability and deliverability of each site in accordance with the approach to economic land availability assessment set out in National Planning Practice Guidance. To ensure consistency with site assessments as part of the 2011 ELR and subsequent call for sites, the same broad assessment framework has been utilised in considering what sites to allocate in the Draft Local Plan for employment uses. The ELR 2011 methodology uses the following criteria:

- Strategic road access;
- Local road access;
- Site characteristics and development constraints;
- Proximity to urban areas, and access to labour and services;
- Compatibility of adjoining land uses;
- Sustainability / planning factors; and
- Market attractiveness.

5.4.25

Each criterion was scored out of 5 according to a described methodology¹⁰⁵ and provided guidance for lowest and highest scores allowing flexible judgement and then an overall site score out of 35 to provide an indication if the site is of high, average or poor quality for employment use. However, the Local Plan evidence base has narrowed the local markets which require more land for employment development and so a more thorough approach has been undertaken to arrive at scores for the 7 criteria which makes up the ELR approach to site assessment.

5.4.26

The Local Plan has only considered new employment land allocations for the following locations:

- Hexham;
- Morpeth;
- Ponteland; and
- Prudhoe.

5.4.27

The results of the assessment of the employment sites is available in the Council's employment land site option appraisal online at:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>

5.4.28

This includes any reasonable alternatives considered to the allocated sites in Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe.

¹⁰⁵ Employment Land Review 2010, Appendix 4 – Site Assessment Criteria. Available online at <http://www.themorpethneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Northumberland-County-Council-Employment-Land-Review-20111.pdf>

Minerals

- 5.4.29 As part of the 'call for sites' undertaken by the Council during early 2018 (and a similar exercise in 2009), sites for the extraction of sand and gravel and crushed rock for aggregate uses were submitted to the Council. The Council received 10 sand and gravel sites and 12 crushed rock sites (a number of coal sites and a sandstone site were also submitted for consideration). A site at Wooler was submitted for both sand and gravel and crushed rock. These sites were then subject to appraisal by the Council during a stage 1 assessment against a range of criteria/considerations, including availability and deliverability, land use, proximity to sensitive land uses, nature conservation, historic environment and landscape and visual impact.
- 5.4.30 The sites that scored well against the stage 1 assessment criteria were included in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan as 'preferred areas' for aggregate minerals extraction (effectively site allocations), with further assessment (stage 2) to be undertaken as part of the development of the Draft Local Plan. The identified allocations in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan included four crushed rock and three sand and gravel site allocations. The Council has adopted a criteria-based policy approach for coal and sandstone.
- 5.4.31 In response to the consultation on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan, one further potential site allocation for crushed rock and two sand and gravel site allocations were put forward and have also been subject to appraisal through stage 1 of the assessment. This resulted in five potential sand and gravel site allocations and five potential crushed rock allocations being taken forward by the Council for further assessment (stage 2 of the assessment).
- 5.4.32 Stage 2 of the assessment has involved input from technical consultees, which were the following Council departments:
- Public Protection Team;
 - County Highways;
 - Lead Local Flood Authority; and
 - County Conservation Team (Ecology and Archaeology and Historic Built Environment).
- 5.4.33 The focus of the stage 2 assessment was to understand in more detail the deliverability of the sites, the potential effects that would arise from their development for mineral extraction and the scope to mitigate any adverse impacts to an acceptable level. Following this more detailed assessment the sites named in Policies MIN7 and MIN8 on sand and gravel and crushed rock respectively are the sites which the Council have taken forward for allocation in the Local Plan. Those sites taken forward for allocation are as follows:
- 5.4.34 For **sand and gravel** land at the following locations are allocated:
- Anick Grange Haugh (new site); and
 - West Wharmley (new site); and
 - Wooperton (extension to existing site).
- 5.4.35 For **crushed rock**, land at the following locations are allocated:
- Belford (Easington Crag) Quarry (extension to existing site);
 - Divethill Quarry (east and north extensions to existing site);
 - Longhoughton Quarry (extension to existing site); and
 - Northside (new site).

5.4.36 Overall, there are a total of 7 minerals sites allocated in the Draft Local Plan (the two extensions at Divethill Quarry are listed as one allocation for the sake of simplification).

5.4.37 The results of the appraisal of the minerals sites (and the reasonable alternatives) are in the Council's stage 1 and stage 2 site appraisal assessments of the potential minerals sites, which are available online at:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>

Reasons for the Rejection of Alternatives

Housing

5.4.38 A larger filtering exercise of potential housing sites was undertaken by the Council through the SHLAA processes. From the initial long list of potential sites a screening exercise was undertaken to filter out those sites considered as not being developable. This filtering exercise discounted sites due to a number of factors relating to their suitability, availability and achievability. These may include the presence of biodiversity designations on site, flood risk, significant highways constraints, ownership issues and viability concerns. A shortlist of potentially developable sites was then subject to further assessment, including consideration of additional criteria relating to the distance of sites from key services and biodiversity designations, and the grade of agricultural land. Housing sites not selected for allocation in the local plan from this shortlist have been discounted because other sites were considered to be more developable and sustainable. The reasons for selection and rejection are also detailed in the Housing Site Allocations Selection and Appraisal Technical Paper on the Council's website under 'Studies and evidence reports', available at:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>.

Employment

5.4.39 As set out above, there has been a wider filtering exercise of potentially suitable employment sites from previous ELRs associated with the development of the previously withdrawn Core Strategy, the HELAA and any sites which came forward through the Council's recent call for sites exercise. From this wider filtering exercise (which employed a range of assessment criteria to screen sites out from further consideration) those shortlisted sites were subject to assessment against the criteria referenced in the paragraphs above and in further detail in the Council's employment land site options assessments, available online at:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>.

5.4.40 Sites which performed poorly against the assessment criteria were rejected and therefore not allocated in the Draft Local Plan for employment development.

Minerals

5.4.41 The potential mineral sites which could be included in the plan were assessed against a range of criteria as set out above and in further detail in the Council's stage 1 and 2 minerals site appraisal assessments available online at:

5.4.42 <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>

5.4.43 Those sites which scored poorly against the assessment criteria (for the stage 1 and 2 assessments) were not allocated in the plan. Reasons for rejection in the stage 1 assessments included the site containing high quality agricultural land, a site being partly located in the adjoining Northumberland National Park (which could have significant adverse landscape impacts), impacts

on European designated sites, unsuitable highways access, proximity to the North Pennines AONB, and proximity to Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. Reasons for rejection in the stage 2 process related to the overall deliverability of the site following inputs from technical consultees within the Council on issues including flood risk, highways impacts, biodiversity and the historic environment.

Gypsy and Traveller

- 5.4.44 As detailed above there are no Gypsy and Traveller sites allocated in the plan and so there have been no reasonable alternatives to consider to any allocated sites.

Waste

- 5.4.45 As detailed above there are no waste sites allocated in the plan (existing waste treatment services and facilities have capacity to cater for the additional waste generated over the Plan period) and so there have been no reasonable alternatives to consider to any allocated sites.

5.5 Local Plan Policies

- 5.5.1 The performance of the proposed Local Plan policies contained within the Draft Local Plan has been tested against the 17 SA objectives. Each policy has been individually appraised (grouped by chapter) against the SA objectives and commentary provided describing the potential effects. Where appropriate, mitigation measures have been identified in order to address adverse effects and enhance positive effects. The findings of the appraisal are presented at **Appendix J** (which is in a separate document accompanying this report).
- 5.5.2 A summary of the policy appraisal is presented in the following subsections, grouped by chapter and focusing on the cumulative significant effects identified.

Delivering the Vision for Northumberland

- 5.5.3 The spatial policies, overall, provide many significant and minor positive effects on the SA objectives. In particular, these policies seek to focus growth in the County's most sustainable settlements and ensure new development will therefore be accessible to key services and facilities (SA Objective 2). These policies would have a significant positive effect on housing (SA Objective 4) by ensuring sufficient, well designed, affordable dwellings are provided over the plan period, offering a mix of tenures and typologies to meet the County's OAN requirement. They would also have a significant positive effect on transport (SA Objective 7) by ensuring delivery of well-connected developments that encourage accessibility and the use of sustainable modes of transport. By providing a framework to promote sustainable development, collectively the policies score significant positives against biodiversity (SA Objective 8), natural resources (SA Objective 9), air quality (SA Objective 12), climate change (SA Objective 14), cultural heritage (SA Objective 16) and landscape (SA Objective 17).
- 5.5.4 Policy STP1 would provide significant positive effects with regard to the provision of housing and strengthening Northumberland's economy, by locating housing and economic development in the areas where it will be the most sustainable and where demand is the highest. However, this policy is expected to have a minor negative effect on the water resources of the County due to the increased demand for water and the need for increased capacity for water treatment works. The Policy is also considered to increase the level of waste produced within the County, associated with the proposed level of housing and employment growth.
- 5.5.5 Policies STP2 and 3 focus on the presumption in favour of and the principles of sustainable development and mean that they provide a range of significant positive effects across the SA

Objectives by ensuring developments have sufficient infrastructure, utilise land and natural resources effectively, are in keeping with the setting and characteristics of their surroundings, and conserve or enhance local biodiversity/geodiversity and ecological assets.

- 5.5.6 Policy STP4 concerns climate change mitigation and adaptation. The policy encourages development proposals to be located so that they reduce the need to travel, implement green infrastructure and contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. It would have a range of significant positive effects, including transport (SA Objective 7), air quality (SA Objective 12), flood risk (SA Objective 13), climate change (SA Objective 14) and waste (SA Objective 15).
- 5.5.7 Policy STP5 relates to health and wellbeing and Policy STP6 relates to the provision of green infrastructure and these would have a range of significant positive effects.
- 5.5.8 Policies STP7 and STP8 both seek to protect Northumberland's Green Belt. Whilst this provides considerable protection to the County's important land resources, landscapes and cultural heritage, the protection of the Green Belt may limit the amount of development (for example housing or employment) that can be delivered in parts of the County.

Economic Development

- 5.5.9 The economic development policies provide for an ambitious level of growth in employment that will deliver on the Local Plan's main 'Economy and Jobs' and other objectives that aim to benefit economic well-being. The policies are focused on the delivery of economic development and regeneration in Northumberland's towns, in their centres, their dedicated employment areas and through other opportunities. The economic policies will generally have positive effects on the SA objectives though given the nature of these policies there are several instances of mixed positive and negative effects, related to effects on natural resources, waste and the environment.
- 5.5.10 The policies (ECN2 – 4 and ECN6) allocate employment land (both new employment land and land carried forward from the existing adopted Local Plans) for development over the plan period for a variety of locations across the County. Policies ECN13 and 14 make provision for economic growth in rural areas. This will help to ensure a flexible and well distributed supply of employment land over the plan period which will help to strengthen and sustain the local economy and attract inward investment. The strategic allocation at Blyth Estuary will build upon its centre of excellence for offshore renewable energy and the existing deep water port facilities.
- 5.5.11 The proposed sites are located in sustainable locations (e.g. the strategic allocations at Blyth and West Hartford and the land allocations at Hexham, Morpeth and Ponteland) which will help accessibility to the new employment and may stimulate investment in public transport from developer contributions. However, with economic growth there would inevitably be an increase in car and HGV use and an increase in vehicle emissions which will have negative impacts on human health, air quality and climate change.
- 5.5.12 There would also be some adverse effects on natural resources (SA Objective 9) and waste (SA Objective 15) due to the amount of new economic development proposed within these policies. Whilst some PDL will be used, there will be loss of greenfield land and some limited Green Belt releases for the employment sites. This will have adverse effects in respect of biodiversity (SA Objective 8), using land efficiently (SA Objective 10) and landscape (SA Objective 17) given the direct and indirect effects associated with greenfield land take. In this regard, 24.3ha of Green Belt and greenfield land has been allocated in the Local Plan for economic development, including the West Hartford strategic employment site. There will however also be some positive effects on land use as some PDL will be redeveloped (there is 8.5ha of land available at the Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area which is brownfield land and there is 53.6ha of brownfield land allocated in the Draft Local Plan for economic development). However, the adverse effects of these policies on the SA objectives would be mitigated to some degree by the other policies of the Draft Local Plan.

Town Centres and Central Services

- 5.5.13 The town centres and central services policies define the centres hierarchy in the County. Building on the overarching spatial strategy this will help to direct development to the most sustainable locations in the County and will help to ensure growth at a scale which re-enforces their role in the hierarchy. The other policies will help to maintain and enhance these centres, to keep high streets vibrant and control development outside of these centres. These policies will have a range of positive effects on the SA objectives including on health (SA Objective 1), community services and facilities (SA Objective 2), economy (SA Objective 5), transport (SA Objective 7), air quality (SA Objective 12) and climate change (SA Objective 14). Locating development in these centres will help to reduce the need to travel and in turn help to reduce associated emissions.
- 5.5.14 Development in these centres will have mixed uncertain and positive effects in relation to the historic environment and landscape (SA Objectives 16 and 17). Poorly designed development could have adverse effects on the historic environment, however redevelopment of PDL would have positive landscape effects. Minor negative effects have been identified in relation to Policy TCS4 on land use (SA objective 10) and landscape (SA Objective 17) reflecting that development outside of the centres hierarchy may result in the loss of greenfield land. Policy TCS3 could also result in loss of greenfield land and so minor negative effects on landscape have also been identified.
- 5.5.15 A number of uncertain effects have been identified in relation to Policy TCS4. This reflects the uncertainty around where any proposals for development outside of the centres hierarchy may be located and therefore what impacts the precise location such development may have, for example in relation to transport (SA Objective 7), biodiversity (SA Objective 8), water quality (SA Objective 11), air quality and climate change (SA Objectives 12 and 14).

Housing

- 5.5.16 The housing policies aim to extend housing choice across Northumberland by delivering an ambitious level of housing growth for existing and future communities and to support the Northumberland economy, alongside providing well-designed and affordable homes to meet the diverse needs of an ageing population. In consequence, the proposed policies would have a number of significant positive effects on the County, particularly with regard to the provision of high quality and affordable housing and a range of housing to suit the needs of Northumberland's residents (SA Objective 4). The policies would provide housing across Northumberland which would be located in sustainable areas.
- 5.5.17 New housing would aid in regenerating and strengthening settlements and communities across the County. The policies would also support older or vulnerable people by providing them with dwellings that suit their personal circumstances better.
- 5.5.18 In providing for meeting the overall objectively assessed requirement for 17,700 dwellings, the Local Plan is unable to influence the significant number of outstanding commitments, although the limited number of site allocations for a residual 1,145 to 1,466 would have an effect on the County's natural resources (SA Objective 9) as would the construction of housing on existing sites carried forward or allocated in Neighbourhood Plans and not yet developed. Some of the new housing would have to be located on greenfield land, though the policies would also result in some PDL being used (there are 19 new brownfield sites and 17 new greenfield sites in the Draft Local Plan which equates to 53% on brownfield and 47% on greenfield, and for the housing supply, which includes development that already has planning permission, and for the overall housing land supply 13% is on brownfield land, 14% is mixed brownfield and greenfield and 74% is greenfield) which would have a mixed land use score (SA Objective 10). There could also be some effects on local landscapes (SA Objective 17) due to the creation of the new housing developments, though

the new housing constructed would in accordance with other policies in the plan be well designed and would be located sensitively.

- 5.5.19 The housing policies when combined with the other policies of the Draft Local Plan would ensure new housing developments are well designed, and are sensitive to the environmental, historical and ecological assets of their surroundings although there remains the potential for individual sites to have adverse effects on a range of the SA Objectives (biodiversity, air quality, water resources, cultural heritage and landscape).
- 5.5.20 The policies themselves alongside the other policies of the Draft Local Plan stress the importance of ensuring provision of adequate infrastructure for new developments. The housing provided by these policies would be supported by new or the upgrading of existing infrastructure to ensure the housing developments can be accessed by everyone.

Quality of Place

- 5.5.21 The quality of place policies are anticipated to have positive effects against all of the SA objectives. The policies seek to deliver quality new development, including requirements for good design, providing high standards of amenity, design principles for the public realm, provision of landscaping and trees as part of new development, ensuring sustainable design and to deliver well designed places. The focus on design will deliver a range of significant positive effects, including on health and well-being (SA Objective 1), helping to deliver safer communities (SA Objective 2), providing everyone with the opportunity to live in a decent home (SA Objective 4), biodiversity (SA Objective 8), and using natural resources efficiently (SA Objective 9). Good design can help to reduce flood risk, and minimise emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change and to reduce waste, all of which will help to have significant positive effects on SA Objectives 13, 14 and 15.
- 5.5.22 One uncertain effect has been identified from Policy QOP3 (Public realm design principles) in relation to education and skills (SA Objective 6). This reflects policy requirement for creating diverse, vibrant buildings and spaces which incorporate a range of public activity - such public activity could include education and training opportunities subject to the types of activity incorporated.
- 5.5.23 No negative effects on any of the objectives have been identified from these policies.

Connectivity and Movement

- 5.5.24 These policies seek to provide improvements to transport and connectivity with development and economic growth supported by investment in infrastructure. They aim to remove or reduce the need for motorised travel and improve the design and implementation of accessible transport systems (SA Objective 7). The policies would therefore encourage a modal shift in transport choice; however, the extent to which this modal shift would occur is uncertain and there remains the potential for the majority of future private journeys to be by either a petrol or diesel engine vehicle. This would have an adverse effect on the air quality (SA Objective 12) and level of greenhouse gases produced in the County (SA Objective 14).
- 5.5.25 Policies TRA1 and TRA2 seek to ensure a spatial distribution to development that reduces the need to travel and that there is a choice of transport modes which would increase the accessibility of the local economy and local employment opportunities (SA Objective 5). Other policies would also have positive effects on this SA Objective. For example, Policy TRA6 supports the sustainable development of Newcastle Airport whilst TRA8 protects and supports the sustainable expansion of the County's ports, harbours and beach launch facilities.

- 5.5.26 Policies ICT1 and 2 will have positive effects on a number of the SA objectives. Digital connectivity will help to improve health and wellbeing, access to services, sustain the economy, provide access to education and training opportunities and reduce the need to travel (SA Objectives 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7). Increasing opportunities to work from home will also have associated positive effects on climate change (SA Objective 14) by helping to reduce emissions.
- 5.5.27 These policies would have a minor positive effect on the accessibility of the County's community facilities/services (SA Objective 2) and educational facilities (SA Objective 6).
- 5.5.28 The policies could have some minor negative effects on biodiversity (SA Objective 8), natural resources (SA Objective 9), land use (SA Objective 10), the cultural heritage (SA Objective 16) and landscapes (SA Objective 17). However, uncertainty exists regarding to what degree these minor negative effects will materialise given some uncertainties on the specific location of development proposals or new infrastructure routes, the nature of any existing resources affected and timing and the mitigation contained in the policies themselves and the other policies of the Draft Local Plan.

Environment

- 5.5.29 The environment policies have been assessed as having a range of either significant or minor positive effects on the SA objectives.
- 5.5.30 These policies would provide significant protection to the County's important biodiversity and geodiversity assets and seek to ensure developments manage their potential effects on these assets. Designated areas such as AONBs, Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and conservation areas would also be protected by these policies and Policy ENV4 (Tranquillity, dark skies and a sense of rurality) seeks to minimise the urbanising effects of development.
- 5.5.31 The County's important water, landscape and cultural heritage assets would all receive considerable protection from the environmental policies, ensuring developments are in keeping with their surroundings and even enhance it.

Water Environment

- 5.5.32 The water policies are expected to have significant positive effects on the objectives that are concerned with protecting the County's water environment (SA Objective 11), managing and reducing flood risk (SA Objective 13) and the effects of climate change (SA Objective 14), with some of the policies having a minor positive effect on a few of the other objectives.
- 5.5.33 The policies would ensure that new developments do not have any negative effects on the water quality of local water bodies. Policy WAT2 ensures that there is adequate provision of water infrastructure (water supply and waste water treatment capacity) to support future growth in the County.
- 5.5.34 The policies (WAT5 specifically) also provides protection to coastal communities and their environment by ensuring coastal defence/erosion schemes are well designed. All of these policies besides WAT1 would have a positive effect on the flood resilience of the County by ensuring new developments are sustainably located and utilise SuDS and flood risk assessments to ensure they have no adverse effects on their surroundings flood resilience. These factors also ensure the County is less susceptible to the current main consequence of climate change (flooding).

Pollution and Land Quality

- 5.5.35 These policies are expected to provide a wide range of significant and minor positive effects on the County. The pollution policies would have a significant positive effect on ensuring the County's natural resources are used in a prudent fashion, encouraging developments to be located

appropriately, avoid adverse effects on the County's important environmental assets and ensure developments carry out remediation works should they be necessary.

Managing Natural Resources

- 5.5.36 These policies relate to the provision for the extraction of and the protection of, Northumberland's mineral resources and would be to have a range of effects on the County.
- 5.5.37 The working, expansion or creation of new minerals and aggregate sites under these policies would all contribute to a positive effect on the sustainability of the local economy (SA Objective 5) by ensuring an adequate local supply of minerals and aggregates would be available to support growth. Whilst direct employment associated with minerals and aggregates is modest (250 or 0.2% of all jobs in the County in 2016), the policies would help safeguard existing jobs and potentially create new ones (during the operational, restoration and aftercare phases and potentially through the supply chain). Policies MIN6, MIN7, MIN8, and MIN9 could help ensure that there is sufficient aggregates and building materials for housing to be built within the County (SA Objective 4).
- 5.5.38 These policies anticipate the use of non-renewable resources but ensure that they are sourced locally (SA Objective 9). For example, Policy MIN4 (Safeguarding mineral resources) seeks to protect mineral resources from sterilisation and require non-mineral developments located within Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) to provide an assessment of how they would affect the safeguarded minerals.
- 5.5.39 The mineral policies are anticipated to have a wide range of effects on the natural resources of Northumberland. The creation or maintenance of mineral extraction sites could be associated with a range of potential effects on biodiversity and geodiversity (SA Objective 8), cultural heritage (SA Objective 16) and landscape (SA Objective 17). Site closure and restoration however provides opportunities for habitat creation, enhancement of biodiversity and the creation of new geodiversity sites which could also have long-term benefits to landscape.
- 5.5.40 The policies encourage the transport of extracted or processed minerals and aggregates by rail and water, seeking to limit the effects from any additional HGV movements (SA Objective 7). However, depending on individual proposals, there remains the potential during the construction and operation of some of the sites and facilities covered by the policies (e.g. Policy MIN6 and the transport of won aggregate minerals and Policy MIN 11 on onshore oil and gas) for substantial HGV movements. These could have localised but significant congestion effects on routes to and from the sites. Such effects from HGV movements would need to be addressed through mitigation measures contained in Policy MIN1 and elsewhere in the plan.
- 5.5.41 The specific requirements in Policies MIN7 and MIN8 and other minerals policies will help to ensure that future extraction of sand and gravel and crushed rock at the specific sites identified in these policies is done in a way which minimises their impact on the environment and surrounding communities. For example, whilst it is acknowledged that there could be loss of Best and Most versatile Agricultural Land (BMVAL) from development of two of the mineral site allocations, this would be mitigated through the requirements of Policy MIN7 and other policies. Policy MIN1 requires mineral developments to be well sited and for any adverse effects to be 'acceptable'. Policies MIN2 and MIN3 would require proper soil handling and restoration to ensure that soil quality is maintained and that progressive restoration is undertaken, ensuring any loss of BMVAL would be temporary.
- 5.5.42 Both the waste and pollution policies would work to ensure new developments within the County are less polluting, create less greenhouse gases and would be resilient to the effects of climate change. For example, Policies WAS1 and WAS3 encourage the collection and use of landfill gas (methane is a greenhouse gas) and require waste developments to be well sited (and so resilient to the future effects of climate change by avoiding areas of flood risk and not increasing the

surrounding areas risk of flooding). Policy WAS2 would require waste management facilities to be well designed, which should increase their resilience to the effects of climate change.

- 5.5.43 These policies would also have clear benefits to reduce the amount of waste being produced within the County and ensuring any waste that is produced is effectively and appropriately managed and disposed of. This would also have the benefit of protecting the County's residents from the effects of mismanaged waste on their health and create safer communities.

Infrastructure and Delivery

- 5.5.44 These policies seek to ensure that the ambitions for sustainable growth can be supported by adequate and necessary infrastructure in a timely manner. This includes the provision of roads and other transport facilities; flood defences; schools and other educational facilities; medical facilities; sporting and recreational facilities; and open spaces.
- 5.5.45 The policies would have positive effects on community facilities (SA Objective 2), housing (SA Objective 4) and economic development (SA Objective 5) by ensuring new developments have sufficient appropriate physical, community, social and green infrastructure capacity, both on and off-site, to support the needs arising from the development. Policy INF1 (Delivering development related infrastructure) requires that any unacceptable effects would be mitigated. In conjunction with other policies in the plan, this could increase the accessibility of local jobs and services through ensuring the provision of an adequate range of transport options (SA Objective 7).

5.6 Draft Local Plan. Cumulative, Synergistic and Secondary Effects

- 5.6.1 In determining the significance of effects of a plan or programme, the SEA Directive requires that consideration is given to the cumulative nature of the effects. This section considers the potential for the policies and proposals contained within the Draft Local Plan to act in-combination both with each other and other plans and programmes to generate cumulative (including synergistic and secondary) effects.

Cumulative Effects Arising from the Local Plan

- 5.6.2 **Table 5.5** presents the appraisal of the cumulative effects of the Draft Local Plan by summarising the cumulative effects of each policy chapter (Chapters 4 to 12) on the SA objectives and by providing an overall judgement on the cumulative effect of the plan policies (including proposed site allocations) as a whole.

Table 5.5 Results of the Cumulative Effects Appraisal

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)	
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	Cumulative effect of the Draft Policies	
1. Health and Wellbeing: To improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.	++/-	+/-/?	+	++/-	++/+	++/-	+	+	++/+	+	++/+	++/-	<p>The Council's development requirements seek to focus growth in the County's most sustainable settlements. New development will therefore be accessible to key services and facilities such as GP surgeries. Whilst growth could place pressure on existing healthcare facilities, some of which are already at or near capacity, the Draft Local Plan policies are expected to help mitigate such effects through, for example, protecting existing facilities, seeking developer contributions towards new provision and by providing a positive planning framework for investment in facilities in accessible locations.</p> <p>The Draft Local Plan policies will help to promote healthy lifestyles through the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure including open space and recreational facilities. The policies also provide a strong framework to protect amenity and maintain and enhance environmental quality.</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)	
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery		Cumulative effect of the Draft Policies
												<p>The strategic, economy and housing policies will have a minor negative effect on health due to an increase in vehicle emissions associated with the delivery through the policies of 17,700 new homes and 242 ha of employment land.</p> <p>Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative significant positive and minor negative effect on this objective.</p>	
2. Community Services and Facilities: To improve the quality, range and accessibility of community services and facilities.	++/ +	+ / 0	++	++/ +	+ / ~	+	~	~	+	+ / 0	++	++/ +	<p>The Council's development requirements associated land allocations and plan policies seek to focus growth in the Council's most sustainable settlements (main towns, service centres and service villages). New development will therefore be accessible to key services and facilities and could help to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the County's main towns, service centres and service villages.</p> <p>Whilst growth could place pressure on existing services and facilities, the Draft Local Plan policies are expected to help mitigate any such effects through, for example, protecting existing facilities seeking developer contributions towards</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter												Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	Cumulative effect of the Draft Policies	
													new provision and by providing a positive planning framework for investment in facilities in accessible locations. Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative significant positive and minor positive effect on this objective.
3. Community safety: To deliver safer communities.													Implementation of the Council's development requirements in accordance with policy requirements for good design will help to reduce crime through good design. There will also be opportunities to re-use derelict land and buildings which would help to deter crime. At the scale of development proposed there is potential for significant positive effects from the spatial vision and also the housing policies. In addition, a number of the other policies will help to facilitate new economic development which will help to increase wealth levels. As there are links between low income levels and crime this will also help to have a cumulative positive effect on this objective.

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	
												Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative minor positive effect on this objective.
4. Housing: To ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home.												<p>The policies and proposed land allocations of the Draft Local Plan will support the delivery of 17,700 dwellings over the plan period, (from existing allocations carried forward and neighbourhood plan allocations as well as a limited number of new sites allocated in the Draft Local Plan) meeting the County's objectively assessed housing requirement.</p> <p>Those policies of the Draft Local Plan that relate to housing will also help to ensure that an appropriate mix and type of housing is delivered to meet local needs and more affordable housing which will provide greater opportunities for home ownership.</p> <p>Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative significant positive effect on this objective.</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	
5. Economy: To strengthen and sustain a resilient local economy which offers local employment opportunities. ++/ +/-												<p>The Draft Local Plan contains a range of positive policies to promote the economy through jobs growth, supporting sectors that are strong in the County and which can grow sustainably in locations such as town centres and rural locations without taking up land resources. The Draft Local Plan will help support the role of the town and local centres in the County in accordance with the hierarchy of settlements.</p> <p>The Draft Local Plan will deliver 242 ha of employment land (both new employment land (approximately 78ha) and existing allocations (approximately 225 ha) carried forward from existing adopted Local Plans) that will support economic growth and further diversification of the economy, providing accessible, local employment opportunities.</p> <p>Through the Draft Local Plan policies, it is also expected that opportunities will be maximised to ensure that the jobs created through employment land provision benefit local people.</p> <p>The Draft Local Plan policies will also help to support the Council's positive growth</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	
												<p>agenda which is linked to wider economic growth through the North East Strategic Economic Plan.</p> <p>Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative significant positive effect on this objective.</p>
6. Education: To deliver accessible education and training opportunities.	+/-	++/ +/0	0	+/-	+	+	~	~	~	+/-0	+	<p>++/ +</p> <p>The policies seek to locate growth, particularly housing, in locations where educational facilities are available. In this way they will help to maintain the existing range of educational facilities and support investment in existing and new schools and services to meet demand arising from new development.</p> <p>Whilst there is the potential that growth could place pressure on existing educational establishments in the County (which are already at or near capacity in some areas), additional investment to address capacity issues would be enabled through developer contributions.</p> <p>The policies will also help to ensure that opportunities are realised to upskill local</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	
												<p>people through new employment development.</p> <p>Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative significant positive effect on this objective.</p>
<p>7. Travel: To reduce the need for travel, promote more sustainable modes of transport and align investment in infrastructure with growth.</p>	++/-	+/-/?	++	+/0/-	+	++	~	~	+	+/-/0	+/~	<p>++/-</p> <p>Growth over the plan period will result in increased vehicle movements which could have adverse effects on the County's highways network. However, the development requirements, supporting land allocations and plan policies seek to focus development in the County's most sustainable settlements. This approach will help to minimise the need to travel whilst economic development more generally may help to reduce out-commuting. The infrastructure policies will help to ensure that there are developer contributions to new or improved transport infrastructure, including public transport which will help to have a positive effect on this objective.</p> <p>Inevitably with delivery of the scale of the new development (17,700 homes and 242ha (new employment land and existing land carried forward from</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	
												<p>existing adopted Local Plans)) of employment land there will be an increase in car and HGV use and so the economy, housing and infrastructure chapters will have in part minor negative effects on this objective.</p> <p>Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative mixed significant positive and minor negative effect on this objective.</p>
8. Biodiversity: To conserve and enhance Northumberland's biodiversity and geodiversity.	++/-	+/?	0/?	+/-	++	+/-/?	++	++/+	+	+	+	<p>++/-</p> <p>Growth in terms of new housing, economic and minerals development is likely to have adverse effects on biodiversity through, for example, land take and disturbance with associated impacts on habitats and species though the HRA concludes no significant effects are anticipated on any designated sites. However, the policies of the Draft Local Plan provide a strong framework that is expected to help maintain and enhance biodiversity and which is expected to help minimise or offset adverse ecological effects arising from development and avoid significant harm to the County's assets.</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter												Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	Cumulative effect of the Draft Policies	
													Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having cumulative positive and negative effects on this objective.
9. Natural Resources: To ensure the prudent use and supply of natural resources.	++/- -	+/- /?	~	+/-	++/+	+/- /?	+	~	++	+/-	+/~	++/- -	The policies and proposals of the Draft Local Plan will result in a significant amount of new development (17,700 new homes (albeit that a large proportion of this has planning permission and some of which has been completed on sites developed) and over 242ha of employment land (albeit that only 78ha of employment land is related to new sites) as well as new mineral sites). The scale of this development will use natural resources (although it is acknowledged that the vast majority of the employment land is open and greenfield (carried forward for employment and allocated in the plan but not yet developed) and/or in the heart of existing, serviced employment areas and much of the large strategic allocation at Blyth Estuary is already committed for port and energy-related uses) which will have negative effects on this objective.

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter												Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	Cumulative effect of the Draft Policies	
													<p>However, the plan also seeks the prudent management of natural resources and ensure the sustainable design of development which will also help to contribute to the prudent use natural resources and a positive effect on this objective.</p> <p>Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a mixed cumulative significant positive and minor negative effect on this objective.</p>
10. Land Use: To encourage the efficient use of land.	++/-	+/-	++/-/?	+/-	+	+/-/?	~	~	++	+/0	+/~	++/-	<p>The policies and proposals of the Draft Local Plan seek to make efficient use of land and promote the reuse of previously developed sites in sustainable locations. In this context, the proposed land allocations will bring forward for redevelopment a number of PDL sites (53% of the new housing sites are on PDL and 13% of the overall housing supply is PDL and 14% is mixed PDL/greenfield).</p> <p>However, development will also result in the loss of greenfield land and also some limited Green Belt releases for employment land (24.3ha of greenfield land and Green Belt land has been allocated in the Draft Local Plan for</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter												Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	Cumulative effect of the Draft Policies	
													employment uses and 74% of the overall housing supply over the plan period is greenfield). Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative mixed significant positive and negative effect on this objective.
11. Water Quality: To protect and enhance the quality of Northumberland's river, transitional and coastal and ground and surface water bodies.	+/~	+ / 0 / ?	+ / 0 / ?	+ / 0	+	+/~	++	++	+	+ / 0 / -	+ / ~	+	The policies and proposals of the Draft Local Plan have the potential to have adverse effects on water quality in the County. However, the Draft Local Plan includes policies that seek to conserve and enhance the County's water resources and in this regard Policy WAT1 stipulates that in assessing development proposals, the Council will seek to ensure that all water bodies achieve 'good status' by 2021 in terms of their ecological balance and other relevant factors, preventing any deterioration in that status. Policy WAT2 in conjunction with other Draft Local Plan policies (for example Policies INF1 on delivering development related infrastructure, INF6 on planning obligations) are expected to ensure the

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													<p>appropriate infrastructure is in place in terms wastewater treatment and water supply to accommodate growth.</p> <p>On balance, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative minor positive effect on this objective.</p>
12. Air Quality: To improve air quality.	++/-	+/-/?	++/?	+/-	+	++/-/?	+	~	+	+/-0	+/~	+/-	<p>Growth over the plan period will result in increased emissions to air during both the construction of new development and once development is complete. However, the development requirements, supporting land allocations and plan policies seek to focus development in the County's most sustainable settlements that are accessible to key services and facilities. This approach will help to minimise the need to travel and associated emissions to air.</p> <p>Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having mixed cumulative minor positive and negative effects on this objective.</p>
13. Flood Risk: To reduce and or avoid flood risk to people and property.	++/?	0	0/?	+/-0	++/+	0/-	+	++	+	+/-0	+/~	+	<p>The policies and proposals of the Draft Local Plan seek to direct development away from areas of flood risk and ensure that development does not give rise to</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	
												<p>flood risk elsewhere. Through the plan's emphasis on green infrastructure provision, there may also be opportunities to enhance flood storage and reduce surface water run-off.</p> <p>Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative minor positive effect on this objective.</p>
<p>14. Climate Change: To minimise greenhouse gases and ensure resilience to the effects of climate change through effective mitigation and adaptation.</p>	++/-	+/-/?	++/?	+/0/-	++/+	+/-	~	++	++	++/-	+/~	<p>++/-</p> <p>New development will result in increased energy use and associated greenhouse gas emissions and also emissions from vehicle use and carbon generation which will have minor negative effects on this objective.</p> <p>However, as noted above, the development requirements, supporting land allocations and plan policies seek to focus development in the County's most sustainable settlements that are accessible to key services and facilities. This approach will help to minimise the need to travel and associated greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Significant negative effects have been identified in respect of resource use which</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)	
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery		Cumulative effect of the Draft Policies
15. Waste: To reduce the amount of waste that is produced and increase the proportion that is reused, recycled and composted.	++/- -	+/- /?	++/ ?	+/--	++/ +	-	~	~	++/+	~	+/~	++/ --	<p>will be significant given the scale of development proposed in the plan.</p> <p>Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having cumulative mixed significant positive and minor negative effect on this objective.</p> <p>The policies and proposals of the Draft Local Plan will result in a significant amount of new development (17,700 new homes (albeit that a large proportion of this already has planning permission and some of which has been completed on sites developed) and over 242ha of employment (both new employment land and land carried forward from the existing adopted Local Plans both for strategic sites and other employment land) as well as new mineral sites). The scale of this development will generate a significant amount of waste which will have negative cumulative effects on this objective.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that the vast majority of the employment land is open and green (i.e. allocated but not yet developed) and/or in the heart of existing, serviced employment areas and much of the large strategic allocation at</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	
												<p>Blyth Estuary is already committed for port and energy-related uses. However, once employment uses are developed on these sites there will be waste generated.</p> <p>However, the Draft Local Plan policies seek to direct development to the most sustainable locations in the County (main towns, service centres and service villages) many of which will have access to waste and recycling facilities which will help to increase the amount of waste recycled.</p> <p>The policies also promote the sustainable use of construction materials, and sustainable design which will help to reduce waste.</p> <p>Overall, the t Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having cumulative mixed significant positive and significant negative effects on this objective.</p>
16. Cultural Heritage: To conserve and enhance Northumberland's cultural heritage and diversity.	++/	+0/?	+0/?	+/-	++	+/-/?	++	+	+	+	+/~	<p>++/-</p> <p>New development has the potential to affect the County's cultural heritage assets both directly (through the loss of, or damage to, assets) or indirectly (through effects on setting) and therefore have negative effects on this objective.</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)	
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													<p>However, the policies of the Draft Local Plan seek to conserve and enhance the County's cultural heritage assets and are expected to help ensure that adverse effects are minimised and that opportunities are sought to enhance assets and their settings.</p> <p>Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative mixed significant positive and minor negative effect on this objective.</p>
17. Landscape: To conserve and enhance the quality, distinctiveness and diversity of Northumberland's rural and urban landscapes.	++/- -	+/- /?	+/- /?	+/-	++	+/- /?	++	+	+	+	+/~	++/- --	<p>Housing, economic and minerals development will affect the character of the County's landscapes and townscapes. However, by focusing development in the County's towns and larger villages, the Draft Local Plan is expected to help minimise effects in this regard whilst the redevelopment of PDL sites and the enhancement of green infrastructure provision present an opportunity to enhance landscape and townscape character. Further, the policies of the Draft Local Plan seek to conserve and enhance landscape, and promote good design which will help to have a positive effect on this objective.</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)	
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	Cumulative effect of the Draft Policies	
													<p>However, a significant amount of new development will be on greenfield land (47% of the new housing sites and 24.3ha of employment as well as some of the existing land for housing (74% of the overall housing supply) and employment being carried forward – for example the West Hartford strategic site is greenfield) and so significant negative effects have been identified on landscape associated with this loss of greenfield land.</p> <p>Furthermore, Seahouses is located within the Northumberland Coast AONB, and Haltwhistle, Bellingham, and West Woodburn are all very near to the Northumberland National Park. No new employment allocations are near any of the County’s designated landscapes but there are a number of settlements where sites have been carried forward for employment use that are near to designated landscapes, for example:</p> <p>Service centres - Allendale is in North Pennines AONB, Rothbury and Wooler are very close to the Northumberland National Park boundary.</p>

SA Objective	Draft Local Plan Policy Chapter											Commentary on cumulative effects (including secondary and synergistic effects)
	Delivering the Vision for Northumberland	Economic Development	Town Centres and Central Services	Housing	Quality of Place	Connectivity and Movement	Environment	Water Environment	Pollution and Land Quality	Managing Natural Resources	Infrastructure, and Delivery	
												<p>Service villages – Chollerford/Humshaugh and Heddon on the wall are very close to or within Hadrian's Wall Landscape setting, Longhoughton is partly located within the Northumberland Coast AONB.</p> <p>Development in these locations could have potential significant negative effect on landscape if poorly designed for example.</p> <p>However, it is anticipated that (as identified above) use of PDL, plan requirements for good design and appropriate mitigation at the planning application stage for site development will help to mitigate any adverse landscape effects.</p> <p>Overall, the Draft Local Plan has been assessed as having a cumulative mixed significant positive and significant negative effect on this objective.</p>

Cumulative Effects Arising From Other Plans and Programmes

- 5.6.3 The policies and proposals contained in the Draft Local Plan sit within the context of a number of other plans and programmes including the local plans of surrounding local authorities. These plans and programmes are identified at **Appendix C** (which is in a separate document which accompanies this report) and include, for example:
- Cumbria County Council (2017) Cumbria Mineral and Waste Local Plan 2015-2030 (MWLP);
 - Derwentside District Council (1997) Derwentside Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of state's Direction, 2007);
 - Durham County Council (2000) Durham Minerals Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of state's Direction, 2007);
 - Durham County Council (2005) Durham Waste Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of state's Direction, 2007);
 - Eden District Council (2010) Eden Local Plan 2014-2032;
 - Gateshead and Newcastle Joint Core Strategy and Urban Plan (2010-2030);
 - North Tyneside Local Plan (2017);
 - Northumberland National Park Authority (2009) Northumberland National Park Local Development Framework – Core Strategy & Development Policies;
 - Scottish Borders Council (2016) Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan; and
 - Wear Valley District Council (1997) Wear Valley District Local Plan (as amended by Secretary of state's Direction, 2007).
- 5.6.4 The cumulative effects arising from the interaction of the Local Plan with other plans and programmes have been considered. The Council is having ongoing discussions with Northumbrian Water on water supply (through the Water Resources Management Plan) and waste water treatment (through their asset management plans) to ensure that there is sufficient water supply and treatment capacity available to support growth; and addressing the issues highlighted by the 2015 water cycle study. Sufficient water supply and treatment issues could be exacerbated by the cumulative effects of neighbouring development plans that are also covered by Northumbrian Water, although it is expected that Northumbrian Water can address such issues through ongoing discussions with Local Authorities and through developer contributions from individual developments.
- 5.6.5 The HRA has also considered in combination effects with other plans. One policy is identified as not having a significant effect alone but requiring assessment in-combination with other plans and policies, which is Policy TRA 3, Improving Northumberland's Core Road Network. This policy supports full dualling of the A1 through Northumberland and improving local road links to it, and full dualling of the A69 west of Hexham and improving local road links to it. Accordingly, its effects will need to be considered in-combination with other plans and policies concerning transport, including the Council's own Local Transport Plan, the Northumberland Economic Strategy and plans and projects developed by the North East Combined Authority and Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency).

5.7 Mitigation and Enhancement

- 5.7.1 As set out in **Section 1.4**, the SA has been undertaken iteratively alongside and informing the development of the Local Plan. In this context, several mitigation measures were identified in the Regulation 18 SA report¹⁰⁶ concerning recommended changes to policy. These are set out in **Appendix I**, (which is in a separate document accompanying this report) including the Councils response to these recommendations.
- 5.7.2 Several further measures were also identified in the Regulation 19 SA Report¹⁰⁷ concerning recommended changes to the proposed Draft Local Plan policies. These are set out in **Table 5.6** below and they remain as recommendations for the Council to consider prior to adoption of the Local Plan.

Table 5.6 Suggested Mitigation Measures

Policy	Suggested Mitigation
ECN1 Planning Strategy for the Economy	Consideration should be given to amending Policy ECN1 to state ' <i>in sustainable locations compatible with the spatial strategy</i> ' in place of ' <i>in the right locations</i> ' to avoid any ambiguity over interpreting the ' <i>right locations</i> '.
ECN5 Large Scale Windfall Employment Development	Policy ECN5 could include a requirement that windfall employment development would be required to demonstrate no adverse environmental effects.

5.8 Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 5.8.1 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA) screening has been undertaken¹⁰⁸ to identify the likely significant effects of the emerging Local Plan upon European sites, either alone or 'in combination' with other projects or plans. This has been undertaken at all stages of the plan making process.
- 5.8.2 In terms of possible effects on European sites from the Draft Local Plan, this relates to one key issue - the impact of increasing levels of recreational disturbance to European sites on the Northumberland coast, arising from additional visitors to the coast from the new development. The HRA concludes that mitigation is required in order to be able to ensure that there will not be an adverse effect on the integrity of these sites arising through the Plan in combination with other plans and projects. This mitigation comprises the provision of wardens to monitor and manage effects on these European designated sites (for example through education initiatives and foot patrols). This will be introduced through the Coastal Mitigation Service, funded through developer contributions within the coastal zone.
- 5.8.3 As with SA, it is accepted best-practice for the HRA of strategic planning documents to be run as an iterative process alongside the plan development, with each version of the emerging policies or options assessed for their possible effects on European sites and modified or abandoned (as necessary) to ensure that the subsequently adopted plan is not likely to result in significant effects on any European sites, either alone or 'in combination' with other plans or projects. In consequence, as with the SA, the HRA will be updated to reflect any changes that may be made to the Draft Local Plan following submission to the Secretary of State and consideration by an independent Inspector at Examination.

¹⁰⁶ Wood, Northumberland Draft Local Plan for Regulation 18 Consultation Sustainability Appraisal Report (June 2018).

¹⁰⁷ Wood, Northumberland Draft Local Plan for Regulation 19 Consultation Sustainability Appraisal Report (January 2019).

¹⁰⁸ Northumberland County Council Habitats Regulations Assessment Northumberland Draft Local Plan May 2019.

6. Conclusions, Monitoring and Next Steps

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 This SA Report has presented the findings of the appraisal of the Draft Local Plan. Specifically, the SA has considered the following key components of the Draft Local Plan:

- Local Plan Vision and Objectives;
- Development Requirements and Spatial Strategy (including reasonable alternatives);
- Proposed site allocations (including reasonable alternatives); and
- Local Plan policies.

6.1.2 The principal conclusions of the appraisal are presented below.

Local Plan Vision and Objectives

6.1.3 The vision for the County seeks to deliver economic and social transformation whilst protecting and enhancing the environment. Reflecting its emphasis on these three strands of sustainability, the vision has been assessed as being compatible with the majority of the SA objectives, although the appraisal has found that it does leave room for uncertainties as potential conflicts could arise between growth, resource use and environmental factors.

6.1.4 The appraisal has found the Draft Local Plan objectives to be broadly supportive of the SA objectives. Where possible incompatibilities have been identified, tensions between the objectives can be resolved if development takes place in accordance with all of the Draft Local Plan objectives. As such, an incompatibility is not necessarily an insurmountable issue.

Development Requirements and Spatial Strategy

6.1.5 The delivery of 17,700 dwellings over the plan period is expected to have a significant positive effect on housing (SA Objective 4). The provision of 885 dwellings per annum is above the minimum local housing need figure (717 per annum) and will help to support ambitious jobs-led growth in the County. A deliverable range of housing types should be provided to support the current and emerging need for housing in the County including for affordable housing. Further, under the preferred spatial strategy, additional residential development would be predominantly focused in the County's market towns, service centres and smaller allocations to meet local needs in service villages. This will help to ensure that new housing is located in sustainable locations.

6.1.6 Cumulative significant positive effects have also been identified in respect of the economy (SA Objective 5). Employment land provision would support proposals associated with the North East Strategic Economic Plan (2017), the North of Tyne devolution deal, the Borderlands Initiative and at a local level the Council's Economic Strategy (2015-2020) and under the preferred spatial strategy, jobs would be created in accessible locations. The provision of 242 ha of employment land (both from new employment sites allocated (approximately 78ha) and employment land carried forward (approximately 225ha) from former District and Borough Local Plans) would also be expected to provide greater choice and flexibility in land supply and is greater than modelled needs for employment land for the County. This could help to attract additional inward investment, support indigenous business growth and, potentially, facilitate diversification of the local economy. The

Council regards it as critical to delivery of the Local Plan strategy to have a flexible supply of employment land.

- 6.1.7 Significant positive effects have also been identified (in part) in respect of health and wellbeing (SA objective 1), community services and facilities (SA objective 2), housing (SA objective 4), education (SA objective 6), sustainable travel (SA objective 7), biodiversity (SA objective 8), natural resources (SA objective 9), climate change (SA objective 14), waste (SA objective 15), cultural heritage (SA objective 16), and landscape (SA objective 17).
- 6.1.8 No cumulative significant negative effects were identified during the appraisal. However, a number of minor cumulative negative effects have been identified on health and wellbeing, transport, biodiversity, use of natural resources, water quality, land use, air quality, climate change, waste (which will have a significant negative effect from the scale of the housing requirement), cultural heritage and landscape (which will have significant negative effects reflecting loss of greenfield land and the limited Green Belt releases for employment).
- 6.1.9 Cumulative effects on the remaining SA objectives have been assessed as either minor or neutral.

Growth Options

- 6.1.10 The Council have considered four growth options:
- Baseline 'business as usual' official projections (6,900 additional workplace jobs – 314 per annum, 10,186 dwellings over the plan period with 509 dwellings per annum);
 - Local housing need standard method – average household growth 2016-26 rolled forward (14,340 dwellings over the plan period with 717 dwellings per annum);
 - Intermediate jobs-led (12,100 additional workplace jobs – 550 per annum, 15,533 dwellings per annum with 777 dwellings per annum); and
 - Ambitious jobs-led growth (16,500 additional workplace jobs – 750 per annum, 17,700 dwellings over the plan period with 885 dwellings per annum).
- 6.1.11 The ambitious jobs led growth option is the growth option which has been taken forward by the Council and this will have a number of significant positive effects on the SA objectives in relation to human health, community facilities and services, housing and economy. This growth option will also have a number of significant negative effects in relation to use of natural resources, land use (in part), water quality, air quality, climate change and waste.

Alternative Growth Options

- 6.1.12 The other three growth options above have been discounted as the Council are seeking to deliver a positively prepared plan, to deliver a level of housing above the minimum local housing need figure in order to support wider growth ambitions associated with the North East Strategic Economic Plan, the Council's own economic strategy, the North of Tyne Devolution deal and the Borderlands Initiative.

Spatial Distribution of Development

- 6.1.13 The Council have considered five spatial distribution options:
- **Distribution Option 1:** Proportionate distribution. This approach would focus the majority of new development in Northumberland's key settlements with smaller scale development allowed

elsewhere in order to support local services and the rural economy. Development in the open countryside would be restricted;

- **Distribution Option 2:** Proportionate distribution within the constraints of the Green Belt. This approach would focus development to the most sustainable locations in the County, would leave existing Green Belt boundaries largely intact, ensure that the countryside is safeguarded from encroachment, check unrestricted urban sprawl, prevent the merging of settlements, and preserve the character and setting of historic settlements;
- **Distribution Option 3:** Proportionate distribution with additional targeted growth. This approach integrates the principles of Option 1 but builds in provision for additional targeted growth. It would also direct additional development and growth in a number of key settlements, primarily in the south east and central parts of the County well connected to Tyneside and require land to be deleted from the Green Belt around a number of larger settlements;
- **Distribution Option 4:** Dispersed distribution. This approach would allow for increased development opportunities across Northumberland but specifically in the settlements in rural areas, with fewer developments being delivered in the market towns and urban areas when compared to other options;
- **Distribution Option 5:** New Settlements. This approach would allow for development to be focussed in new settlements, of a scale to enable the level of development to support a number of key services. To ensure new settlements are sustainable, they should be located close to key employment centres and transport links. By their nature new settlements would be in the countryside.

6.1.14 **Option 2** (proportionate distribution within the constraints of the Green Belt) is the Council's preferred option for the distribution of development in the County in the Draft Local Plan. This option has been selected as it will facilitate the distribution of development to the most sustainable locations in the County, whilst also respecting the constraints of the Green Belt which covers large areas of the South of the County.

Alternative Spatial Distribution of Development Options

6.1.15 The other four spatial options above have been discounted as the Council consider that each of them would be associated with effects inconsistent with national planning policy requirements to ensure that growth is planned for positively for the homes and jobs needed in the County. Options would either lead to development being insufficient to meet the needs of the community, inappropriately located, requiring additional greenfield land or requiring or requiring exceptional justification for loss of Green Belt.

Proposed Site Allocations

6.1.16 Overall, the scale of housing and employment land to be delivered through proposed site allocations is considered to be significant and will help to meet the future needs of the County, its communities and businesses over the plan period whilst minimising the potential for significant adverse environmental effects. This reflects the fact that the majority of dwellings and employment land will be delivered in/adjacent to main towns and service centres which have greater capacity in terms of their sustainability to receive growth. Overall, significant positive effects have therefore been identified in respect of human health, community facilities and services, housing and the economy, although cumulatively development could place pressure on key services and facilities (if unmitigated).

- 6.1.17 There is the potential for new development to result in adverse environmental effects (and in some cases, significant negative effects). However, in many cases (such as in respect of biodiversity, land use, water, flood risk, cultural heritage and landscape) it is anticipated that the potential adverse effects could be mitigated or reduced at the project level. In this context, the Local Plan policies will help minimise adverse effects and enhance positive effects associated with the delivery of the proposed site allocations.

Alternative Sites

- 6.1.18 The alternative sites considered but not allocated in the Draft Local Plan have been discounted for a variety of reasons and these include proximity to biodiversity designations, distance from key services such as public transport, schools and health facilities, highways issues, peripheral locations on the edge of settlements, availability and deliverability, general suitability and availability. For these reasons the allocated sites are considered to provide the most preferable combination of sustainable and deliverable sites.

Local Plan Policies

- 6.1.19 The implementation of the proposed policies contained in the Draft Local Plan is anticipated to have positive effects across all of the SA objectives. These effects are expected to be significant in respect of: human health, community services and facilities, housing, economy, education, transport, biodiversity, natural resources, land use, climate change, waste, cultural heritage, and landscape. This broadly reflects the likely social and economic benefits associated with the delivery of housing and employment in the County over the plan period and the strong framework provided by the plan policies that will help to conserve the County's natural and built environments and resources.
- 6.1.20 Despite the overall positive cumulative effects associated with the implementation of the Draft Local Plan policies, cumulative negative effects on the SA objectives have also been identified against some SA objectives including: human health, transport, biodiversity, natural resources, air quality, climate change, and cultural heritage. This principally reflects impacts associated with the construction and operation of new housing and employment uses and the development of land carried forward from the existing adopted Local Plans in Northumberland including , resource use and emissions. However, where negative effects have been identified, it is expected that those policies of the Draft Local Plan which seek to conserve and enhance the County's natural and built environment and protect its communities, facilities, resources and assets and promote good design will help to minimise and mitigate any adverse effects.
- 6.1.21 Significant negative effects have been identified in respect of waste (from the scale of the housing that will be delivered over the plan period), land use and landscape reflecting the cumulative loss of greenfield land and limited Green Belt releases for employment (47% of the new housing sites are greenfield and 74% of the overall housing supply is greenfield, 24.3ha of greenfield and greenbelt land is allocated for employment, as well as existing land .carried forward (for example the West Hartford strategic employment site is greenfield)).

Summary

- 6.1.22 Overall, the appraisal has demonstrated that the majority of the SA objectives will experience positive effects as a result of the implementation of the policies and proposals contained in the Draft Local Plan. Whilst negative effects have also been identified against many of the SA objectives, the Draft Local Plan includes policies which seek to manage these effects such that significant adverse effects will be largely avoided.

- 6.1.23 Reasonable alternatives, in terms of development requirements, the Spatial Strategy and site allocations, have been considered as part of the SA of the Draft Local Plan and earlier plan development stages. The appraisal of these alternatives has demonstrated that, overall, the proposals of the Draft Local Plan perform similar to, or better than, the alternatives considered when assessed against the SA objectives.

6.2 Monitoring

- 6.2.1 It is a requirement of the SEA Directive to establish how the significant sustainability effects of implementing the Local Plan will be monitored. However, as earlier government guidance on SEA (ODPM *et al*, 2005) notes, it is not necessary to monitor everything, or monitor an effect indefinitely. Instead, monitoring needs to be focused on significant sustainability effects. Monitoring the Local Plan for sustainability effects can help to answer questions such as:
- Were the SA's predictions of sustainability effects accurate?
 - Is the Local Plan contributing to the achievement of desired SA objectives?
 - Are mitigation measures performing as well as expected?
 - Are there any adverse effects? Are these within acceptable limits, or is remedial action desirable?
- 6.2.2 Monitoring should be focussed on:
- Significant sustainability effects that may give rise to irreversible damage, with a view to identifying trends before such damage is caused;
 - Significant effects where there was uncertainty in the SA and where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigation measures to be undertaken; and
 - Where there is the potential for effects to occur on sensitive environmental receptors.
- 6.2.3 **Table 6.1** below presents potential monitoring indicators which could be used to monitor the effects of the Local Plan. This list contains a number of indicators which are already in common use and highlights potential indicators for all of the SA objectives.

Table 6.1 Potential Monitoring Indicators

SA Objective	Possible Indicator(s)	Sources(s)
1. Health and Wellbeing: To improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.	Life expectancy at birth. Amount of eligible open spaces managed to Green Flag Award standard. Any planning permissions given contrary to Health and Safety Executive advice. Level of open space and sports facility provision.	Public Health England AMR Northumberland County Council AMR
2. Community Services and Facilities: To improve the quality, range and accessibility of community services and facilities.	Overall County Area ranking in English Indices of Deprivation. Ranking of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) of deprivation in the County Area, out of the whole of England. Amount of retail floorspace completed. Loss of retail floorspace. New retail and leisure development in Morpeth and other main towns.	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government AMR AMR Northumberland County Council

SA Objective	Possible Indicator(s)	Sources(s)
	Loss of retail floorspace in Morpeth and other main towns.	Northumberland County Council
	Vacancy rates in Morpeth and other main towns.	Northumberland County Council
	Number of applications permitted for new community facilities.	AMR
	Number of community facilities lost to other uses.	AMR
	Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP; a hospital; a primary school; a secondary school; areas of employment; and major retail centres.	Northumberland County Council
	Neighbourhood Plans and other community-led planning tools being put in place.	AMR
	Provision of key infrastructure.	AMR
	Amount of non-A1 uses permitted on ground floors within primary frontages.	AMR
3. Community safety: To deliver safer communities.	Rates of Crime in Northumberland	Northumbria Police
4. Housing: To ensure everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home.	Net additional dwellings completed by size and type.	AMR
	Housing land available.	AMR
	Housing affordability ratio.	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
	Net affordable housing completions.	AMR
	Number of market homes provided on rural exception sites.	AMR
	Number of new Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches and plots approved.	AMR
	Number of existing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches and plots approved for a change of use to other uses.	AMR
	Number of new dwellings achieving M4(2) of the Building Regulations 2015.	AMR
	Number of new dwellings achieving M4(3) of the Building Regulations 2015.	AMR
	Number of self-build homes completed.	AMR
	Number and type of specialist residential accommodation completed.	AMR
	Net additional employment floorspace completed including by type.	AMR
	Loss of employment floorspace by type.	AMR
5. Economy: To strengthen and sustain a resilient local economy which offers local employment opportunities.	Employment land available by type.	AMR
	Location of large new office development.	AMR
	Number of businesses.	Nomis
	Jobs density.	Nomis
	Proportion of residents economically active/inactive.	Nomis
	Unemployment rates.	Nomis
	Employment by occupation.	Nomis
	Mean full time workers gross weekly pay.	Nomis
	The percentage of working age people with qualifications at, or equivalent to, NVQ Level 2 and above.	Nomis.
	School capacity/number of school places created.	Northumberland County Council
	The percentage of working age people with qualifications at, or equivalent to, NVQ Level 2 and above.	Nomis.

SA Objective	Possible Indicator(s)	Sources(s)
6. Education: To deliver accessible education and training opportunities.	Number of new dwellings built within 400m and 1,500m of an infant or junior school, and within 2,000m of a secondary school.	AMR
7. Travel: To reduce the need for travel, promote more sustainable modes of transport and align investment in infrastructure with growth.	Average distance travelled to work.	Office for National Statistics
	Commuting flows.	Office for National Statistics
	Car ownership - % of households owning one or more car/van.	Office for National Statistics
	Travel to work by different modes (e.g. bus, train, car, bike, foot).	Office for National Statistics
	Traffic volumes.	Highways England and Northumberland County Council
	Amount of completed development complying with Car-Parking Standards.	Northumberland County Council
	Bus and rail service provision.	Northumberland County Council
	Park and ride provision.	Northumberland County Council
	Residential development within 30 minutes public transport of: GP; hospital; primary school; a secondary school; and Morpeth.	Northumberland County Council
8. Biodiversity: To conserve and enhance Northumberland's biodiversity and geodiversity	Number of planning approvals that generated any adverse impacts on sites of acknowledged biodiversity importance.	Natural England/ Northumberland County Council
	Change in area of designated biodiversity sites.	AMR
	Number of TPO trees or woodland removed as a result of development permitted.	AMR
	Area of priority habitat delivered.	Natural England/Northumberland County Council
	Number of major developments generating overall biodiversity enhancement.	Natural England/Northumberland County Council
	Hectares of accessible open space per 1,000 population.	Northumberland County Council
	Proportion of dwellings completed with access to natural greenspace within 400m.	Northumberland County Council
9. Natural Resources: To ensure the prudent use and supply of natural resources.	Total volume of aggregate landbanks.	Northumberland County Council
10. Land Use: To encourage the efficient use of land.	Net dwelling completions as a percentage of total completions on previously developed land.	AMR
	Total amount of employment floorspace on previously developed land.	AMR
	New residential densities.	AMR
11. Water Quality: To protect and enhance the quality of Northumberland's river, transitional and coastal and ground and surface water bodies.	% of river stretches with good/very good biological water quality.	Environment Agency
	% of river stretches with good/very good chemical water quality.	Environment Agency
	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on water quality grounds.	AMR
	Water efficiency rate of new dwellings.	AMR
12. Air Quality: To improve air quality.	Air Quality Management Areas declared as a consequence of development.	Northumberland County Council
13. Flood Risk: To reduce and or avoid flood risk to people and property.	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on flood defence grounds.	AMR
	Number of new major developments that incorporate SUDS and reduce water run-off.	AMR

SA Objective	Possible Indicator(s)	Sources(s)
14. Climate Change: To minimise greenhouse gases and ensure resilience to the effects of climate change through effective mitigation and adaptation	Renewable energy capacity installed by type. Number of applications permitted for renewable and low carbon technologies. Reduction in carbon dioxide emissions above the requirements of current Building Regulations for non-residential developments of 1,000 sqm or more. Number of new non-residential buildings achieving a minimum BREEAM rating of 'Very Good', CO ₂ emissions per capita. Energy consumption.	Northumberland County Council Northumberland Council AMR AMR Department for Business, Energy and Industry Strategy (BEIS) BEIS
15. Waste: To reduce the amount of waste that is produced and increase the proportion that is reused, recycled and composted.	Volumes of municipal and commercial and industrial waste generated.	Northumberland County Council. DEFRA Environment Agency
16. Cultural Heritage: To conserve and enhance Northumberland's cultural heritage and diversity.	Number of listed buildings demolished. Number of developments permitted affecting designated heritage assets. Number of developments permitted affecting non-designated heritage assets. Number of developments permitted affecting archaeological sites. Number of heritage assets identified as being 'at risk'.	Northumberland County Council Northumberland County Council Northumberland County Council Northumberland County Council Historic England
17. Landscape: To conserve and enhance the quality, distinctiveness and diversity of Northumberland's rural and urban landscapes.	Harm to non-protected landscape features. The number of applications approved with adverse impacts on designated landscapes.	Northumberland County Council Northumberland County Council

6.3 Next Steps

- 6.3.1 The Draft Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (together with the May 2019 SA Report) and will then be subject to independent examination.

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